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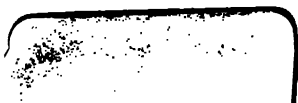
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HORNBY MILLS;

And other Stories.

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And other Stories.

BY

HENRY KINGSLEY.

AUTHOR OF "RAVENSHOE," "OLD MARGARETS," "GEOFFREY HAMLIN,"
"THE HARVEYS," ETC.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BRADBURY, EVANS, AND CO., PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

Dedicated

BY

HENRY

TO

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HORNBY MILLS GARDEN.

HORTICULTURUS and Viator had a discussion about gardens and gardening the other day, as they went along the Great Eastern Railway, past Paul's at Cheshunt, and Rivers' at Sawbridgeworth. Viator, perhaps ill-naturedly, advanced the theory that in the matter of gardening we were going back, if not into barbarism, at least into "Chineseism;" that one of our new ribbon gardens was, in the first instance, as ugly as it was possible to make any arrangement of beautiful flowers; and, secondly, that it was never worth looking at twice. Viator instanced my Lord this's garden, and then my Lord the other's garden, and lastly lost his temper in falling foul of the last hideous horror of coloured walks; set up for the example and admiration of mankind by

the Horticultural Society at South Kensington. Horticulturus, though jealous of the honour of that body, has imbibed too much of the sweetness of his own flowers to be angry with Viator. He smilingly put the question by, saying that the Horticultural Society was bound to be in the van of horticultural thought, and that brickdust walks were that van. When Viator asked him, in return, whether the Horticultural Society could not lead public taste instead of following it, he became interested in the doings of a roach-fisher on the banks of the Lea. He would not fight that point.

Viator tried him on another: on the *expense* of this bedding system.

"Every one now," said Viator, "down to the farmers' wives, are discontented unless they have their beds brown and bare for six months, and for the other six filled with formal patterns of geraniums, calceolarias, and lobelias, the keeping of which through the winter costs money. Very little has been done for cottage gardeners—which, I take it, means people who cannot afford a gardener—by the Horticultural Society. Why don't you encourage the discovery of good hardy perennials from temperate regions, instead of ransacking the

tropics for things which, however beautiful, can only be grown by noblemen and rich tradesmen? Why, that most excellent and admirable handbook, *The Cottage Gardener's Dictionary*, has got so dreadfully genteel in its notions, that I am ashamed to open it; it makes me feel like a poverty-stricken snob. Just take the directions for growing a common anemone. 'Take maiden loam from the surface of a pasture, turf and all [how would my landlord like *that*, I wonder?]; to every load of this add one of cowdung, and half a load of sea or drift sand; form the whole into a ridge, and let it remain a year *at least*, turning it every three months.' If you cannot do this, says the *Cottage Gardener's Dictionary*, you may possibly get on (miserable snob that you are) by doing this—'Get light garden soil and rotted cowdung, one load of the former to half a load of the latter, and a quarter of sea sand.' Now, this is a fine look-out for a man who wants a few anemones, is it not?"

"Don't run down that book," said Horticulturus; "it is a very good book."

"It is a wonderful good book," said Viator; "but it is too doctrinaire for poor and ignorant people like

me. I don't want cowdung and sea sand. I want anemones. And I get them."

"But you are on the chalk, you know."

"I was not always, and I always had them," said Viator; "but you cannot deny, even if I give up anemones, that you can make a garden bloom from January to December, without keeping a gardener up half the night watching your flues."

"You are in the main right," said Horticulturus; "but not altogether. I allow that we are neglecting some of the most beautiful flowers; I allow that we are getting too absurdly formal in gardening, as in many other things; but you cannot have a perfect English garden without some things which require heat through the winter, unless you are prepared to buy them."

"Unless you are prepared to buy them at half-a-crown a dozen"! retorted Viator, "that is better than having your man, your groom, gardener, knife-cleaner, pig-feeder, game-keeper, boot-polisher, message-goer, clothes-brusher, up three-quarters of the night, all through a long frost, to look after them. Yes, I allow all that. The question is, what can we poor folks do

towards having a garden, if we can't afford a gardener?"

"Shall I bore you," said Horticulturus, "if I describe to you a certain *ménage* where there *was* such a garden; one of the most beautiful I have ever seen?"

Viator begged him to proceed.

"When I was a boy," said Horticulturus, "and a very young one, I used to be very much petted, and, I fear, very much spoilt, in a certain country house in Lincolnshire.

It was not a nobleman's house, or a baronet's house, or even a squire's house. It was a large house attached to a great watermill. The people of the house made their money by trade, as the tall chimney stalk beyond the shrubbery, by the carp pond, plainly showed to any one passing within a mile or so of the place. As for we little folks, *we* knew well enough about the business, and were rather proud of it too.

We used to say, and I believe now, that the house had been a 'religious house,' because of the great fish-ponds which surrounded it. The fact that it lay in a hole, rather below the level of the neighbouring ditches, seems to confirm that theory, though the house itself

was scarce a century old. There was a rookery, in elms planted certainly at the Restoration, and the garden invaded their shadows, until nothing would bloom in the shade except primroses, which grew white and flesh-colour in the darkness; a wilderness of wild hyacinths, shining in May like another heaven; wood anemones, wood sorrel; the blue pasque anemone. And as the summer heat settled down, and made the summer beds blaze into a scarlet mass of geraniums, and infinite varieties of other beautiful flowers, the golden Tutsan St. John's wort lit up the darkness of the shrubbery. Waterer in those days was a comparatively young man at Bagshot, and Azaleas were hardly invented.

It was a house of noble and generous profusion. There was not any venison, because there was no pretension to a park; but there was everything else. There were hunters, which would carry Uncle Jack and Uncle Tom (heavy weights) over anything, reasonable or unreasonable; there was a dog cart for Uncle Seithenin, who was fat and puffed, and who never rode; and there was a pair of carriage horses which would take Aunt Bridget to Lincoln races on the Tuesday,

with I dare not say how many of us riotous young monkeys in and about the carriage, and would repeat the performance on Friday, with another relay of riotous young rascals and rascalleesses ; and would never wink their eye. There was a wonderful cob, the governor's ; and there was a still more wonderful pony, bought for seven pounds ten at Horncastle fair, and brought home in the gig in a gale of wind, in front of Uncle Jack and Uncle Tom ; and they had driven over two fallen trees by the way.

There was in the house everything which makes life worth having. Maids to wait indoors (and how much better they wait than men), grooms in their proper place out of doors, running out at the first ring of the horses' feet on the yard pavement. Cocks and hens (fine-bred Dorkings and game fowls, Cochins and Brahmas, had not then been selected or developed) ; pigeons (mainly Runts, but a pair or two of Fantails and Almonds for the ladies), turkeys, guinea-fowl. Hobbes, old Berkshire, and China pigs ; ducks in the old monks' fish-ponds ; carp of sixteen pounds weight, and tench of four ; a hawk and a stork. It was a paradise of a place, altogether, for old as well as for young,

but entirely after a schoolboy's heart. When I read *Marjorie Fleming* the other day, I fully sympathized with her when she said, 'I am going to Braehead, where there are ducks, cocks, hens, bubbly-jocks, two dogs, two cats, *and swine*, which is delightful.' They satisfied her soul, those pigs.

A busy brisk house, until you opened a gate in a wall, and passed into the odorous silence and heat of the garden; here was a stillness scarcely disturbed by the cawing of the rooks. This was the ladies' quarter. This was the life's amusement of the two maiden sisters of the house, Aunt Bridget and Aunt Hester. On this garden they lavished all their own perfect refinement; to this garden I wish to call your attention, as a type of English garden now almost extinct; and before I have finished with it, I think you will allow that I was right in speaking of the general *ménage* of this particular country house.


Young folks, folks under, say, sixteen, were, as a rule, excluded from this garden. When Aunt Bridget and Aunt Hester were younger and more inexperienced, they used to accept offers of assistance from the greatest of their little nephews and nieces; but in my time they

had grown too wise. The peculiarity of that family was that it was a chivying family. No three young members of it ever got together without one member starting off like a lunatic, and the other two members starting off after him or her, howling like gorillas. This did not do in this particular garden. *I* was admitted to it only because, in the first place, I was a visitor; and, in the second, because in my case chivying was only an occasional weakness, not a confirmed habit. Alas! the family 'chivied' away a fearful sum of money before they had finished.

Extravagant as all the other arrangements in the house were, there was no extravagance in the garden. There was no gardener, for instance, worth calling so, only an old man kept on by the week, with sometimes a labourer to help him; all the direction, and no inconsiderable part of the work, was done by those two charming refined maiden ladies. A rich acquaintance of ours, Mr. Dash, has made me laugh to-day, by telling me of a letter he had received from a gardener who had advertised for a situation. This gentleman gardener said '*that he did not like the tone of Mr. Dash's letter, and thought the place would not suit him.*' Now

the old garden I speak of is not much smaller than my friend Dash's garden, and, I think, infinitely more beautiful. The one was kept in order by two old maids and a cripple; the other is handed over to the tender mercies of a prig who is an approver of the tone of his master's letter.

In the one case, the garden is a pleasure, and has interest for one; in the other, your servant is your master, and gardens for his own glorification. *Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*. Make the whole place into a croquet ground. English stud grooms have aroused the British Lion, and masters have asserted themselves in their stables, and protested against the doctrine that two thousand pounds' worth of horseflesh was bought for the especial behoof of the servant: it is nearly time that the ladies of England should rise against the gardeners, whose sole object seems to be to avoid all hard work, to carry off prizes at the shows, and to make 'their' garden as much like the nearest nobleman's as possible. 'I am not going to take "my" horses out this weather,' the coachman was saying a few years ago. The gardener is equally rebellious, though in a different way. He sneers at you with precedents, until the battle



is not worth fighting, and you yield. The lady is apt to say, 'He is an excellent gardener, he came from Lord Thingamy's, he must have his own way, or he will go.' Let him go, and use your own brains, which are as good as his, and your own well-formed taste, which is a hundred and fifty times better than his. If you want bands of red, yellow, and blue, like these new vulgar cockney ribbon gardens; if you want to utilize your flowers in barbarously imitating the most barbarous pattern on a bad Chinese shawl; if you want to commit the artistic blasphemy of making flowers hideous, by planting them in patterns which would make Owen Jones howl with anguish, then keep your gardener. You may partly succeed in your efforts at ugliness at first, but before autumn nature will be too strong for you, and for the gardener who don't like the tone of your last letter. Before the first frost, when you have got tired of this miserable imitation of arabesque, go and look at your long-neglected beds. You will see that nature has been hard at work against you, and has nearly undone your work, or, for politeness' sake, your gardener's work, and that the flowers have stretched out their arms towards one another, and

mingled their individual beauties in a soft, hazy cloud of colour.

Let us look again at this garden, managed by the two maiden ladies and the old man, and let us compare it with one of your new-fashioned gardens, which show nothing but bare brown earth from November to May.

There were but few sorts of chrysanthemums cultivated then, and those of inferior sorts ; but such as there were, were gay and gaudy enough. In an open winter, their yellow had scarcely become tinged with the delicate rose-pink which marks their decay, when the Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*) began to blaze out in white patches of large flowers at regular intervals about the otherwise empty beds ; and before they were gone, the whole map of the garden was marked out by brilliant golden lines. The little aconite, planted thickly, close under the box edging, showed the shape of each parterre in a hard golden line. The garden, beautiful at all times, was seldom more beautiful than at the beginning of February, when the aconite and hellebore were in flower ; but before the yellow bands and the brilliant white patches had begun to fade, the colour of the garden had changed : the Hepaticas—

crimson and blue alternately, and giving a general effect of purple, planted closely just inside the aconites —marked out the beds once more with a new colour, and held on nearly till March.

But by this time nature, under the guidance of our two ladies, had begun to rebel against formalism, and there was no more 'ribbon gardening.' After the Hepaticas, the flower borders began to possess a new interest, and your admiration of 'bands of colour' became lost in the contemplation of individual beauty. From the *centre* of each bed, white, yellow, and purple, arose a corona of crocuses, about two feet in diameter, matted thickly together, and the whole garden shone like fire, relieved by the moonlight effect of the snow-drops. Almost with them came patches of the pale pink dog-toothed violet, and the white dog-toothed violet with the purple eye (which last is, with very few exceptions, one of the most beautiful flowers in nature, and the roots cost sixpence apiece). None of the above-mentioned roots were ever moved; they cost nothing whatever in maintaining; and, once planted, would flourish for ever, being far best left alone.

I say that one flower *succeeded* the other in this

wonderful garden ; but the truth is there was no break. The crocuses were not fairly done, and the dog-toothed violets not half done, when a still more fantastic piece of colour trickery was ready for your eye. A ring arose round the fading crocuses, cunningly alternated in every other bed. In the one bed this ring was made up of cream-colour, pink, white, and purple, all commingled ; in the next, of a vivid intense scarlet, more vivid than most Geraniums, nearly, or quite, equalling the brightest tropæolum ; and these bands were about a foot broad. What were these flowers ? These were the anemones, nodding their heads to one another in the March wind, and seeming to congratulate one another on the coming spring. We must now leave the principal borders for a while, and go down to certain sloping beds near the gold-fish pond, in front of the moss-house, which were never disturbed by the gardener's fork, and which are quite ready for us now.

The first thing which struck the eye here, in this quiet sheltered spot, sloping south, were bright patches of the common primrose, shining among the ferns and other green vegetation like groups of stars ; until you had ceased looking at them, you could not take in the

fact that there was a haze of blue violets mingled through them, which was loading the air with perfume. Primulas, too, of every wonderful variety were here. All the beautiful polyanthuses, some running almost into dull purple, others almost into fiery scarlet. The pale and coloured primroses, the commoner auriculæ, the sturdy oxlip, the delicate scented cowslip, even the rare pale blue bird's-eye primrose. There were orchises from the meadow trenches, sombre-coloured fritillarias from the Oxford meadows, blue pasque anemones: every flower which spoke of spring, of budding leaves, of singing-birds, of the renewed hopes and plans which always come to us at that time, year after year, until the eternal spring buds forth which never turns into summer; all these were collected here in that quiet sunny border beside the fish-pond, and close to the churchyard."

Viator here begged Horticulturus not to be sentimental.

"Every flower in that spring border," Horticulturus said obstinately, "spoke of spring-time, and youth, and hope, and love-making. And of all the beds in the garden, those two quiet melancholy old maids—quiet

and melancholy amidst all the growing extravagance and profusion around them—loved that secluded border the best, and tended it most carefully. They may have walked out among the blooming meadow flowers, not alone, once on a time, and that may have been the reason why they bent their spare and weakening bodies, and their faces, which grew more anxious year by year, as the reckless riot went on, so lovingly over them now.

The wonderful freshness and beauty of our English spring flowers is scarcely beaten by any class of flowers in the world, he continued, any more than a good example of our English spring is to be rivalled, either for weather or for colouring, elsewhere. The Australian spring, when nature expresses herself in a sudden efflorescence of delicate, hitherto unnamed, orchises; when the earth is all flowers, and the air like maddening champagne, that is a season which goes near to satisfy your soul; but an English spring is finer. The 'lushness' of the English spring vegetation is, I think you will find, unsurpassed in the world. I have had a glimpse of the tropics, and you may see the tropics at Sydenham and at Kew pretty well: have they anything

to offer you like an acre or so of wild blue Hyacinths in the middle of May? Ireland I have not seen, but I have seen Devonshire. Devonshire is "lush" to a degree, but coarse. Animal life begins to get scarcer there than in that richer band of country which is washed from the chalk hills of the southern and eastern counties. Where, as in Devon, every ditch is full of trout, and every little stream is overshadowed by "*osmunda regalis*," nature is beginning to get coarse, gaudy, and tropical. Nature thinks most carefully and most delicately in her temperate regions, where her soul is tried by the battle with a winter. South of the line of winter snow she gets profligate and careless. In the midland, eastern, and south-eastern counties she bestirs herself: she produces a dozen species there for one in Devon: there are ten species of fish in Berkshire for one in Devonshire. When she loses the stimulus of winter she gets lazy, and dreams herself away into such things as trout and king fern.


Viator began to wonder whether Mr. Richard Swiveller had been dining with Mr. Ruskin, and, having taken too much wine, was trying to emulate that gentleman's style. No, it was his sensible friend, Horticulturus,

who was making these wonderful flights. He struck in directly.

"A *half* truth," he said, "after a whole one, which you seldom get, is one of the finest things going. It at all events promotes discussion. But I never heard any good of a *quarter* truth. What you say about animal life is a quarter truth or less. True as it is about Devonshire, it is false about the tropics, and what is more, about Scotland. I could tell you where you were wrong, but I want to hear more about this garden of yours. Let us leave these 'spring beds,' which have led you such a wonderful ramble, and come back to the main garden, which flowered like Chatsworth, without any expense, and to the two old maids. What, for instance, succeeded this waving glory of parti-coloured anemones which I have seen, and can therefore appreciate?"

"They were contemporary with the wallflowers," said Horticulturus, "which were in separate beds, and with the tulips, which were in a close-planted ring round them, and which were, about the middle of May, removed to make room for the geraniums," &c.

"The London artisans might grow these flowers?"



"These and a great many more. I wish I could give a hand to help these artisan flower-shows. They appeal to the sentimental part of me strongly. Dickens, or rather Mr. Timothy Linkinwater, quite as real a person as Dickens himself, originated them, you know, when you and I were boys. You remember the hyacinths in the broken water jug? I thought you did. The chrysanthemums in the Temple Gardens are the glorious outcome of those hyacinths."

"H'm," said Viator, "what you would do without your Shakspeare and your Dickens, I do not know. You are always quoting them. What came next?"

"Tulips. Now there again is a flower which is probably more than any other easily cultivated by the artisan. (Working man, you say; well and good, we will *say* working man, then, though *I* work sometimes.) Your working man ought to be told with regard to tulips that if he spends a trifle of money in the first instance, he will get a flower which is not only ornamental to his window, but is remunerative. If he will get from that invaluable little book, *The Cottage Gardener's Dictionary*, or Routledge's *Choice Flowers*,

the *points* of a good tulip, and the way of cultivating it, he will find that the second year's offset will nearly pay him for the original root. Tulips could be as well cultivated in London as they are in Holland. The smoke don't affect them very much, in fact very little. So you see that a dexterous artisan gains nearly three weeks' pleasant contemplation of a beautiful flower, and it costs him nothing. Nay, more, the contemplation of that flower in a spring evening would keep him from the public house. What sends them to the public houses is, that, from base to garret, there is no thing of beauty on which they can rest their eye."

"Is that so?" said Viator, with a slow smile. "I should have thought otherwise. If you set me to contemplate a tulip for the whole of a spring evening, I should certainly, as the working man would, adjourn to the public house—I mean to the club. Now go on: and get practical once more about Hornby Mills.

"Meanwhile, ever since the middle of February, a hot-bed had been made, and dozen upon dozen of flowerpots filled with choice flower-seeds, and by the time the tulips were removed the beds were ready for their reception. Carter's or Sutton's lists will tell you

what these plants were. China asters and stocks are those which live most in my memory: and of these, mostly the latter."

"Stocks?"

"Yes. My first introduction to stocks was at Aix-la-Chapelle. Behind a manufactory there, was a garden, into which I had leave to wander. It was a garden with a fountain in the middle: a garden looked into by three white walls of factory, with those long continental windows, which one never sees in this little island of ours. There is no gravel about Aix-la-Chapelle, or if there is I never saw any, for the garden walks are made from the cinders of the manufactory fires. Placed against that dull funereal substitute for our bright English gravel, I first saw the dull funereal colour of first-rate German stocks, and I have admired them and believed in them ever since. Zinnias, stocks and *Salpiglossis* are the only flowers I can name, in the limits of my knowledge, which have good half tints. No stock with a positive colour about it is worth a half-penny. The colour of a stock in its brightest tones should be ashy, and funereal. This is not difficult to account for. German stocks naturally come from Ger-

many, and their dull half colours are of course a natural outcome of the dreamy Teutonic mind which——”

“Please don’t,” interrupted Viator; “where can you get the seed? Let us have done with the Teutonic mind.”

“Page’s at Southampton,” Horticulturus replied. “I don’t see what reason you have got to interrupt me.”

“Have you anything more to tell me about this wonderful garden?”

“A great deal. I could put more into your head about gardening than ever was there before; but you won’t let me do it in my own way. Once more; is the garden we saw to-day, a labyrinth of badly-conceived and worse-executed Chinese patterns, with a Scotch gardener to show you over it, and point out (not explain, a Scotchman even couldn’t do that) its barbarisms—is that a garden at all?”

“A sort of one.”

“A sort of one, exactly. But these two old ladies of mine had flowers in their borders all the year round, whereas my lord’s beds are utterly empty six months in the year. Can you gather that?”

“Yes.”

“ Well, when the time came their garden was just as brilliant as my lord’s, and ten times more artistic. Time would fail me were I to attempt to tell you of the beauty of these flower-beds in summer ; of the mass of colour, confused but always artistic, which grew brighter as the summer went on, and which lay round the towering spikes of the hollyhocks, the various lilies and *bee* larkspurs (the *Delphinium formosum*, the most splendid of our perennials, unless the new blue columbine of last year, which I have not yet seen, is destined to beat it, was not invented then). These hollyhocks and *bee* larkspurs were insignificant-looking things, just outside the anemones, if you will do me the favour to remember ; not obscuring them in the least till they were out of flower, and then shooting up, and hiding the untidy crocus grass, and the seedy-looking foliage of the anemones, until they in their turn died down with the first frosts of autumn.

“ So much,” continued Horticulturus, “ for the most perfect and well-arranged garden I have ever seen, and what is more, the cheapest. Let me recapitulate for a moment. The centre of each bed was filled in an oval or square of two feet, more or less, with thickly-planted

crocuses; outside this, a ring of anemones; outside this again, a ring of hollyhocks and delphinia; then a bare space, of say four feet, to receive the summer flowers. Then the Hepaticas, a hedge of ivy-shaped leaves in summer, for a few weeks in early spring a blaze of crimson and purple; then the closely-planted aconites and then the box. Such was the garden. I can describe its colour, but the hot rich *scent* of it is beyond me. The recollection of it makes me faint. It was the sweetest smelling garden I was ever in."

"Was?" said the unsentimental Viator.

"Yes. It is gone now. It was the most cheap and the prettiest garden of its pretensions I ever saw; but it is gone. Part of the old house is left, and a well-to-do man lives in it. But he has laid three quarters of it down in turf, because he says, much as he likes flowers, that he can't afford them. But Aunt Bridget and Aunt Hester never spent one hal on their glorious garden which he does on his formal, and somewhat ugly (if flowers could be ugly), rows of calceolarias and scarlet geraniums. Now, in July, instead of the eye wandering from one curious piece of beauty to another,

it loses itself, and gets thoroughly cocknified in running along mere bands of colour."

"All the old perennials eradicated?" asked Viator.

"Very nearly. Nature occasionally reasserts herself, to the great disgust of his gardener. Some of the old tulips still insist on peering up through the new turfed ground, to be nipped off by the new mowing machine. Impertinent crocuses still appear in the middle of the beds. The dear old Hepaticas still hope to be forgotten by the new cockney gardener, and modestly thrust themselves up in his absence (for he never is in the flower-garden before May) and appeal to his more highly educated master. He *pleads* for them, but what pleading is of any avail against the spite of a doctrinaire new broom? To give you an instance. There was a flower in that garden which for some reasons was very dear to Aunt Bridget and Aunt Hester. It was the 'tree balsam,' a flower which sheds its seed and reappears in spring. My friend's wife took a fancy to it, and would have some of them preserved. In my presence the gardener told his master (or servant) that it was a common cottage flower, and was not fit to be seen in a gentleman's garden, and spitefully maimed

and rooted up as many as he dare. I am stating a plain fact."

"We are running too much into priggishness," said Viator; "the competitive examination——"

"Who is talking too fast now?" asked Horticulturus, sharply. "I am not the only person who ought to be taken up shortly."

"Then the old family gave up this house, as I gather, and it has passed into other hands?" asked Viator.

He grew grave. "Well, the fact of the matter is, that although the garden was very cheaply managed, it was the only cheap thing about the place. When the ruin began, or where it began, I have never been able to settle with myself to this day. You can ruin yourself at anything you take in hand, if you give your mind to it, from horse-racing up to chapel-building. There are a whole lot of ways of ruining yourself if you only take care," he continued, frowning, and scratching his head. "Fox-hunting, steeple-chasing, coursing, and farming; neglecting your business, keeping too free a table, going to law about nothing at all, going to all the races, buying horses, selling them

again by the auctioneer in a hurry ; building cottages for labourers at a calculated return of four per cent. when no reasonable being would do so under seven ; buying pictures without knowing a hang about them ; renting shooting ; having a good sound family sherry at sixty-two, and port at eighty, and making your guests drink a good deal of each ; going to London, which is ruin, and going to Paris, which is bankruptcy. Lor' bless you ! a man with a genius for ruining himself might do it with any one of these things. And the male Hornbys had not only the genius for ruining themselves, but they did all these things together.

Their extravagance got greater and greater as time went on, and as ruin got nearer. The old people, both father and mother, were dead by now. Uncle Jack got louder, coarser, and more dictatorial ; Uncle Tom, the proudest and cleverest of the men Hornbys, got more witty and more genial ; and Uncle Seithenin kept the fox-hunters and shooters up later at night. At first, gentle, but determined Aunt Bridget, and the gentle, but timid Aunt Hester, tried to stem the torrent. Aunt Bridget, the bigger and more strong-minded sister, would say, ' Gentleman, we shall be

happy to see you in the drawing-room at your earliest convenience ;' and Aunt Hester (the ex-beauty of the county) would pipe out a few words about a 'little music.' But the two ladies were left to sit in their drawing-room alone, and the men would stay arguing, sometimes quarrelling, over their wine, until a theory was erected that the ladies must be gone to bed.

Then the counting-house and tobacco ; then everybody saying the first thing which came into his head, and every one talking at once ; and so on all night, till some not tipsy guest, wandering out into the glorious summer morning at four o'clock, before going to bed, would find Aunt Hester at her flower-beds. And she would turn her beautiful withered face on his, and say, "You gentlemen were rather late last night, were you not ?" And so that belated wanderer, having in his eye a distant view of strong-minded Aunt Bridget, looming large and grand among the distant hollyhocks, and seeing an immediate chance of 'catching it' from her, would sneak off to bed, feeling very much ashamed of himself.

As time, and as ruin also, went on, matters began to get too fast and too furious for Aunt Bridget and

Aunt Hester. They were always ill when there was a dinner-party ; and as there was one now every day, we ought to suppose that their health was utterly undermined. But no. When the crash came, theirs were the stoutest hearts, the soundest heads, and the ablest bodies in the establishment. They knew what must come, far better than their drink-sodden brothers. The bitterness of death was past with them. They had seen the thunderstorm rising over the horizon long ago, and had spoken to their brothers, Uncle Jack had told them to mind their own business, Uncle Tom had sneered at them, and Uncle Seithenin had stared at them wonderingly out of his watery, drunken eyes.

“ And how did the crash come ? ”

“ Suddenly, of course. The whole thing went wrong at once. Everything was ready for it, of course ; but it came suddenly, after all. They had been neglecting the manufactory and business, and the goods turned out were of inferior quality, notoriously so, it appeared afterwards. The goods were not consumed near the mills, but fourteen thousand miles away, and it is a far cry to Loch Awe. Then they had lost a lawsuit, a

twopenny-halfpenny squabble about a trespass; and it was just so doubtful that they were able, in sheer temper, to carry it to a higher court. The married sister's dowry had never been paid, but was supposed to be invested in the business, and her husband came down for it. Uncle Tom (the clever and handsome one) came back from Lincoln Races, looking like death; but was soon after gone again to Liverpool, with that most sour-headed horse, Nogo, and a villainous-looking steeple-chase rider, who looked like Mr. Sponge's illegitimate brother returned from Botany Bay, to try his luck at the great cross-country race; with no success at all. Then, on one Saturday night, the hands were kept about till twelve o'clock, or a little past, and regaled with beer, getting paid about half-past one. The next Saturday night they were paid in part. Still, none of the tradesmen were dreaming of pressing. No one dreamt they were coming to a standstill. Old Chancy, the lawyer, will tell you that at this time, if they had put their affairs in his hands, they might have spent their thousand a year apiece now.

That Saturday night at Hornby Mills, (and it was

Easter-eve,) they say was a very 'wet' one. Every one drank, and drank hard—except Uncle Tom: he refused his drink (a good drinking man, too) steadily. But Aunt Bridget, walking out into the brisk, sweet spring air, and preparing her mind for the blessed renewal of all good resolutions which are made at the altar on Easter day, found him lying drunk among her lilies of the valley, in the south spring bed, which I have described before. She went and roused a groom, pointed out his master to him, walked away over the common, and tried to forget it. The groom went near the drunken man, but not very near: he went back to the rooms over the stable, looking ten years older in his fright and consternation, and roused the other grooms and helpers. Uncle Tom, lying among the lilies, was not drunk, but dead."

And Horticulturus told Viator how: and they both sat silent a minute. Uncle Tom had cut his throat.

"He was the last of that family with a grain of conscience and honesty, and that was what it brought him to. And that is what consistent, selfish heathenism, not to mention heavy drinking, may bring any physically brave and originally honest man to."

"That is very horrible," said Viator. "I shall never look at lilies of the valley again without seeing a red stain on them. You ought not to have told it."

"That is right," said Horticulturus. "If you shut your eyes tight enough, you know, you won't see anything."

"I suppose the crash came soon after this?" asked Viator.

"Soon is not the word. The whole game was over in an instant: everything was perfectly quiet before this. The gunpowder at Delhi was only a stored mass of black grains, until Willoughby, looking round to the waiting conductors, saw by their eyes that they were ready, and threw down his hat. The run for the Jumna Bridge, when the black thread fuses were fizzing on fast towards the iron doors, was not more rapid than the rush of ruin on the dear devoted old house. It seems to me scarce a short week before it was all over. The other brothers made no effort: Uncle Seithenin had always been tipsy, and Uncle Jack never very sober; and now they did nothing and thought of less. Those two noble old heroes, the sisters, worthy to be mentioned with almost *any* hero,

made an offer of some poor pittance they had in their own right ; but the creditors had not heart to accept it : besides, the ruin, when it came to be examined, was so awful and so gigantic, that their poor but noble little offer was really not worth accepting. Nearly one hundred and eighty thousand pounds was their deficit ; and in their fall they dragged down a county bank with them, which had, like Paul, Strahan, and Bates, thrown good money after bad, to keep afloat their greatest creditor ; and which bank, had it not been for the Hornbys, could have struggled on until happier times. So that Aunt Bridget and Aunt Hester had to retire to a little cottage with two drunken brothers, and this additional misery. They consistently believed, to the day of their deaths, that the ruin of all the people who had to begin life over again by the failure of the bank lay at *their* doors. Poor innocent souls, *they* had done their little possible always."

"And this is your pleasant discourse about flower-gardens ?" said Viator. "What became of the brothers ?"

"They did what such men generally do in such cases—took to their beds and died of nothing in par-

ticular,—of mildew, I should say, if the faculty recognised such a disease. Uncle Seithenin, who went first, appeared before the registrar-general with the ticket of ‘Pneumonia, combined with delirium tremens.’ Maria, the faithful old maid, who stuck to the family in their retirement, had been long accustomed to remark about Uncle Seithenin, ‘that the drink had taken hold of his passages;’ which I suppose means the same thing; and she, goodness knows, had seen enough of drinking in that house to be, to a certain extent, a judge. As for Uncle Jack, he went to bed one night, and declined to get up the next morning, and, indeed, never got up any more: *his* ticket was, I believe, ‘General decay.’ But he took to his bed and died, of no acute disease, at the age of fifty-five, within a year of his bankruptcy. With Uncle Seithenin you never could have done much; with Uncle Jack you might have done a great deal more; with poor Uncle Tom you might have done anything. But the school in which they were brought up would, saving your presence, have ruined me and you as certainly as it did them. The *practical* creed which those men were taught, as soon as they were old enough to stay

in the dining-room after the ladies, was this: that there was only one thing finer than low intrigue, and that was hard-drinking. I don't say that their own father encouraged them, but he sat at the end of a table and held his tongue. As for religious *thought* among the men of that household, they could hardly understand the idea, if it had ever been presented to them, and it never was. I, as a high churchman, would rather——"

"We needn't mind what you, Horticulturus, would rather," said Viator; "but these women of yours seem to have been so vastly superior to the men, how do you account for that?"

"My dear Viator," said Horticulturus, earnestly, "the other day I was confabulating with a Union schoolmaster, one of the finest fellows who ever stepped, whose whole heart and brain are in his work, and who studies the character of every boy as carefully, according to his light, as Arnold. His *object* is to get as many of his boys as he can into the army, chiefly as bandsmen, for he trains them to music. His *difficulty* is that the most of them *walk* so badly, and it is difficult to teach them to march, and the doctor is apt to reject them. I asked him why this was. He said

‘Sir, three-quarters (I forget the proportion) of these boys are illegitimate, or have been deserted. They have never had a mother’s care, *and no one will take the trouble to teach a child to feel his feet except his own mother.*’ Now that gives one a little light. Old Mrs. Hornby was a superior woman in every respect; but old Hornby was not at all her equal. I could say a great deal about the superiority of the women over the men in the manufacturing class, but unless you wish——”

Viator begged him not to trouble himself.

“The girls, then, were carefully trained by their mother. Old Hornby was very anxious that the boys should not be milksops, and he had his will; they were taught to despise the influence of women very young, and were taken out of their mother’s power almost as soon as they could ride their ponies. Old Hornby was anxious that they should be chips of the old block, as like to him when they came to his age as they could be; he had his will here too in a way, for they were chips of the old block, but only chips. Old Hornby used loudly to say that his sons should be gentlemen, though *he* could never be one. He had not his will

here at all, for they never were gentlemen, not even gallant Uncle Tom, though their sisters were ladies, and most perfect ladies too. If they had been left more under their mother's influence, and sent to school when the time came, they might have made gentlemen. But then they weren't, and that makes all the difference, don't you see?"

Viator saw all that.

"Well, now we come," said Horticulturus, "to the end of it all. Aunt Bridget and Aunt Hester lingered on a few years in their cottage, until the stouter and more energetic Aunt Bridget died very suddenly; Aunt Hester lingered on in her solitude till very lately.

"It was last Easter-day that I saw her last. She came slowly creeping up to the Altar rails after every one else, and all alone. When she rose I saw that she was almost too feeble to stand, and I stepped out and took her to her pew. When, after church, she found out who it was who had helped her, the poor old lady's expressions of humble gratitude were painfully affecting. I begged her to let me take her home, and we went together into her little cottage garden, for she insisted on,

giving me some flowers, 'they were all she had to give now,' she said. They had brought all the old, hardy, and beautiful spring flowers out of the old south border, and so her little garden was blooming bright and fair in the April sun. She made me up a little bouquet of narcissus and oxlips: I had always admired oxlips as a lad, she remembered, I used to say they were such sturdy flowers. And then, calling me by my Christian name, she spoke a little of the dead and of the past. They were all gone from her now, she said, and it was very lonely sometimes, very lonely. The winter nights were so very, very long. 'Old people's memories,' she added, with a feeble smile, 'generally get dulled, but mine is as keen as ever. I cannot forget; there is no relief for me in *that* way.' And so I left her standing in the sweet spring weather among her opening flowers, and went my way, somewhat disinclined for noisy and foolish conversation that day.

"She was not alone long. She died five days after, the last of her name. They have built a cockney villa where her cottage was, and all the flowers are gone. I was pleased to see, however, an irrepressible

tulip forcing his way up between the bricks in the stable yard. I respected him and felt inclined to kiss him as the last of the Old Lot. Well, here is Cambridge."

WHY LADY HORN'BURY'S BALL WAS POSTPONED.

COURT JOURNAL, April 12th.—“Lady Hornbury's ball on May 2nd is unavoidably postponed.”

“What is the matter?” said all the world and his wife. On this occasion the world and his wife were very easily satisfied ; Sir John must have had another stroke, and Lady Hornbury would soon be the most beautiful widow in England of her age, while her daughter Edith would be one of the greatest heiresses. The male line was notoriously extinct. Sir John was a shrewd man of business, a little apt to be near, and the very last man in the world to enrich unnecessarily a successor to his house in the shape of a new husband for Lady Hornbury. The world and his wife were easily satisfied ; one of the pleasantest houses in London would be closed that season, and of course Lady Horn-

bury could not go out in the present state of her husband's health. So said the world that week, but the world was astonished out of all propriety when it went into the Park next day to find Sir John—faultlessly dressed and as upright as if paralysis and he had never made acquaintance—riding his celebrated bay, with his faultlessly appointed groom quite a long way behind him, by no means close to him, as he used to ride when Sir John was likely to have a seizure. The world, in short, was utterly puzzled ; the more so when he answered that Lady Hornbury was perfectly well, but had been called suddenly from town on business, and would probably not appear for a considerable time. Sir John was a man who generally did his own business as well as his wife's, and it seemed very strange that he should be riding about so coolly in the Park, and Lady Hornbury gone away on business. Mystery was added to mystery when Hunter, of the dragoons, came on the scene and reported himself returning from the camp at Chalons, where he had been professionally examining the French cavalry : he said that he had met Lady Hornbury at the station at Calais, just getting into the Paris train. Here was a great mystery ; Edith Horn-

bury was at school in Paris, and was to come out at the great ball now postponed. What on earth was the matter ?

Sir John and Lady Hornbury were, deservedly, nearly the most popular people in London ; they were wealthy, clever, kindly, and good-humoured. He was much older than she, but she was absolutely devoted to him, and never left him for an instant in his very numerous illnesses, one of which had resulted in a very dangerous attack of paralysis. There was perfect confidence between them, although Sir John had hitherto left all matters relating to his daughter to the care of his wife, only asking from time to time how the girl was getting on. She was all that could be desired ; discreet, beautiful, accomplished, and perfectly obedient in everything, a most model young lady in every respect : early in her life she had shown a will of her own, but it seemed to have been perfectly subdued by her parents' kindness and indulgence. An event which had taken place a year before this had shown her submission in the most remarkable way. She had been staying at a country house, her old Aunt Hornbury's, where there was a large general society, and a style of living under

the careless, good-humoured old maid most conducive to mild flirtation, or, what the old lady called it, "the young people being happy together." The old lady, however, drew a pretty sharp line in these matters, and thinking that Edith's attention was a little too much engaged by a very handsome young fellow, a Mr. Holmsdale, wrote to her mother quietly, and Edith went very submissively home. Her mother never mentioned the matter to her, and all was perfectly secret, until some months after, the maid who had been with her at her aunt's tremblingly told her that Miss Edith was corresponding with this Mr. Holmsdale, and handed her a letter of which the following were the contents:—

"SIR,—Once more I request you to cease this utter folly. I have unfortunately once told you that you are not indifferent to me, and for that one expression in a moment of weakness I am to be persecuted to death. You must take your final answer, and further letters from you, sir, will be instantly laid before my father."

"I think that our girl has behaved very well indeed," said Sir John, when his wife showed him the letter. "Deuced well. I wish my sister would keep her house

in better order. The girl shan't go *there* again. I think we are very well out of it; give me the letter."

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Send it to him addressed in my handwriting, with my name signed in the corner. I shall send it under cover to my sister; her butler knows his address. Who is this Holmsdale?"

"I don't know; the villain!" exclaimed Lady Hornbury.

"We don't know that he is a villain, my dear," said Sir John; "he must be a gentleman, or my sister would never have had him to her house."

"A clandestine correspondence!" said Lady Hornbury, bridling.

"My dear, did we have no clandestine correspondence when I was a younger brother, and a dragoon, with five hundred a year, and you a fine lady, with Lord Bumpster at your heels everywhere? Did not you tell me once that if your mother pressed on the match with him that you would run away with me on five hundred a year and your own fortune, and trust to my poor brother Tom to get us something? And you would have done it, my lady, come."

"I was very young and foolish," said Lady Hornbury.

"Well, and Edith is young and wise," said Sir John, kissing her. "Now the first thing to do is to turn that maid of Edith's out of the house."

"Why? We owe her much," said Lady Hornbury.

"I tell you that no right-thinking young woman would have betrayed a kind and gentle young mistress like Edith in a love affair," said the atrocious dragoon, Sir John. "What would you have said to your own maid in old times if she had done it to you?"

The *argumentum ad hominem* was a little too much for honest Lady Hornbury, and she had to laugh again. "But," she added, "if we send her away she will talk about the matter all over the town and country."

"Well, then, double her wages and let her stay," said Sir John; "but don't let me see her. And as for Edith, let her have change of scene; give her a year's school somewhere. Send her to Comtesse d'Aurillac, at Paris; she can't come to any harm with that old dragon."

"My daughter will come to no harm anywhere," said Lady Hornbury, proudly.

"That I am quite sure of, my dear. But the society

at the old lady's pension is very agreeable; none but the very best legitimist girls, and no followers allowed."

"I would not be vulgar, Sir John, if I were in your place," said the lady; "will you *ever* forget the barracks?"

"You were very nearly knowing a good deal about them yourself, my lady, that night when you proposed to run away with me."

Lady Hornbury swept out of the room majestically, and left Sir John laughing. There was very little conversation between mother and daughter, for Edith found in a day or two, by an answer which came from Holmsdale, that her father and mother knew everything. She was completely impassive in their hands; but apparently the Holmsdale wound had gone a little deeper than her mother had thought for. Edith spoke very little, and seemed cheerful at the thought of going to Paris. In a week she was with the Comtesse d'Aurillac.

Every letter from the Comtesse breathed delighted admiration for her charming and beautiful pupil. Since Madame had been forced by the lamentable occurrences

of the Revolution (her two aunts perished in the September massacres) to take pupils, she had never had such a pupil as Edith. She was the admiration of every one who had seen her, and the brightest star in her little legitimist galaxy: everything went perfectly well for three months, and Sir John and Lady Hornbury were delighted.

About this time there came to Sir John and Lady Hornbury a lumbering young nobleman of vast wealth, who was in some sort a connection of theirs; so near that they called him cousin. He called one morning to say that he was going to Paris, and to burden himself with any commissions to Edith.

"I should like to see my old playmate very much," he said. "I was a lover of hers when we were in the schoolroom; I should like very much to see her once more, though I suppose she is getting too fine for me."

There was not the slightest objection to his seeing as much of his cousin as he chose, and Lady Hornbury wrote a note in her best French (Madame d'Aurillac did not speak English, nor did Lord Lumberton speak French), whereby the Comtesse d'Aurillac was re-

requested to receive Lord Lumberton as one of their own family. The Comtesse received him in French, and he responded in English: he stayed on in Paris, and in two months the Comtesse found it necessary to write to Lady Hornbury as follows:—

“MADAME,—My Lord Lumberton's visits are extremely frequent here, and I should be very glad to know your instructions as regards them. I have not the least reason to believe that anything has passed between Milord and your beautiful daughter, but at the same time, Madame, I think that he thinks of her a little more than he does of my other young ladies, while she treats him with merely the kindness of a cousin. I observe that in our little family parties she prefers dancing with M. de Rocroy, a gentleman of the very highest refinement and introduction, until lately gentleman-in-waiting to his most Christian Majesty Henri V. at Frohsdorf (whom may the holy saints have in their keeping); M. de Rocroy however appears as indifferent to her as she is to him. This feeling of Milord Lumberton's may ripen into an attachment, or it may not. I only await your instructions as to my management in this affair.”

"What shall we do now?" said Lady Hornbury to her husband.

"Do!" said Sir John. "Nothing at all. If Lumberton likes to fall in love with her, I don't see why we should put a spoke in his wheel. The lad is a good honest fellow enough, and would make any woman in the world happy. Old d'Aurillac says that she doesn't care for him, so there is no immediate danger: let Lumberton go to her, but don't say anything to the girl herself. Write and tell old d'Aurillac that we approve of his visits."

"But Edith is not out," said Lady Hornbury.

"My banker's book tells me that," said Sir John. "If she can make up her mind before she does come out, all the better for her."

"He may gain her affections before she has had an opportunity of choosing."

"That is precisely what happened to yourself, and if you don't regret it I am sure I don't; you know that we were engaged before you came out. No, there is not an unmarried man in London whom I would prefer to Lumberton."

"But, Sir John, submissive as Edith is now, you must

remember the time, not so very long ago, when she had both a will and temper of her own. Any attempt to force her inclinations would be fatal."

"When will a woman learn to argue?" said Sir John, testily. "I don't want to force her inclinations, I only want her to receive Lumberton's visits. If you don't wish Lumberton to see her, you are doing the very best thing to make her think more of him by sending him to the right-about without the ghost of a cause."

Lady Hornbury gave way after a time, good-humouredly. She was a woman, and, good and honest as she was, would very much have liked to have had Edith out in London, and to have gone through that game of chess with eligible suitors as castles and knights, and with ineligible suitors as pawns, in which every British mother delights. But she yielded; Lumberton would most certainly "do." She wrote to Madame d'Aurillac at once before she went out, and, being in a hurry, wrote in English. What follows is part of her letter:

"Both Sir John and I quite approve of Lord Lumberton's visits. Edith and he were cousins and play-mates, and the matter is quite a family one."

Which Madame, with the aid of a dictionary, translated to mean that the two families had agreed on a *mariage de convenance* in the French fashion.

The effect of this wonderful discovery on the part of Madame was singularly delightful to Lord Lumberton, who was by this time honestly head over heels in love with his cousin; and also singularly and terribly disagreeable to poor Edith, who, for reasons of her own, was nearly out of her mind. Whenever Lord Lumberton came now he was left alone with her, Madame d'Aurillac always quitting the room after a short time, with a far-seeing air, as though she was looking towards St. Petersburg, to see if the ice was breaking up so as to allow of navigation; and the young ladies leaving also with that air of *espièglerie* or archness of which some Parisian ladies are mistresses, and which has occasioned more than one British islander, while suffering from the spleen, to long to throw his boots at their heads. Lumberton desired to do nothing of the kind; he was in love, and he liked it, though sometimes he would have wished when they were alone that he had something to say for himself. Edith of course knew that he loved her, and she had no dislike for him, but would chat with him

over old times, about his sisters, his horses, his dogs, and such things, which helped him on wonderfully. Edith knew that some day or another he would speak, and she was quite ready for him. Good fellow as he was, she would as soon have married a chiffonier. She never alluded to his attentions to her mother, and Madame d'Aurillac only occasionally mentioned his presence at her house as a matter of form. So matters went on for months, until there came a cataclysm. Lady Hornby received this letter:—

“MADAME,—When I receive a viper into my bosom, or a snake into my house, what do I do? I expel that snake or that viper. Madame, I have discovered a snake in the form of your daughter's maid, Rose Dawson, and I have expelled her with ignominy, having first had her boxes searched by warrant from the Juge d'Instruction. Madame, we found four thousand francs in gold, which we could not retain, so she is gone free.

“My eyes, Madame, have long been directed in a certain quarter. I have now, in consequence of the Revolution, to address my attention to the forming of young ladies. I have therefore an eye not readily

deceived. I have noticed for a long time looks of intelligence pass between M. de Rocroy and your daughter's beautiful, but wicked, maid. I saw an intrigue, and I watched; last night they were in the shrubbery together for an hour, and at last I came on them as they were saying farewell. Him I banished my house at once, telling him that his sacred Majesty Henri V. (whom the Virgin and Saints preserve till he comes to his own) should hear of this violation of my hearth. Her I despatched as you have heard. I have broken the truth to your sweet and gentle daughter, who has acquiesced, though with sorrow."

"I told you that girl was no good," said Sir John. "You had better send for her home and provide for her, or she will be talking about the Holmsdale business with emendations and editions. I shall, if Lumberton ever says anything to me about Edith, tell him the whole of that matter."

"I suppose we ought," said Lady Hornbury. "If Lumberton cannot see how well she behaved, he is unworthy of her; but wait till he speaks, for it is not everybody's business. I don't think that he cares much for her. I hear nothing of it from Madame."

But Lumberton spoke very shortly afterwards. He spoke kindly, honestly, and tenderly. He said he would wait any time she chose, that she should come out and look round in the London world to see if there was any one she liked better, but that he would not take No as an answer now. He looked so noble and manly in his faith and honour, that for one instant she felt inclined to confide everything to him, but she felt a chill as she reflected that she was in France, and that a deadly duel would be the consequence. She had been ready for him very long, and she was ready for him now.

"Cousin," she said, "if you think that I do not love you and respect you for what you have said, you are very much mistaken; but I vow before heaven that if you ever speak to me like this again I will enter the Romish Church and take the veil."

"Edith!"

"Do you remember in old times my starving myself for a day because I was not allowed to go to Lady Maitland's children's ball?"

"Yes, I remember it."

"I will starve myself for good if you ever speak to me

like this again. Now you must go ; you must go at once."

" Never to meet again ? "

" Never until you have given up all intention or hope of mentioning this subject to me."

" Then it is never," said the poor young gentleman.

" Good-bye, Edith. And so he went."

" I could have managed him in no other way," thought Edith, after he had gone. " Poor fellow ! how happy he will make some good woman when he has forgotten me. He has gone upstairs to Madame d'Aurillac to tell her. Well, Madame, you will not be long in arriving, but it is to no purpose."

In fact, Madame d'Aurillac arrived in about a quarter of an hour with some crochet work, smiling ; and Edith's old will was roused, for she saw that the old Frenchwoman was going to play a game with her which a child of six years old could have seen through, and she was determined to beat Madame's refined French fence by what Madame would have called the British *boxe*.

" I have intruded, I am afraid," said Madame, " but where, then, is Lord Lumberton ? "

"I thought he was upstairs with you, Madame," said Edith, looking straight at her.

"He was on the stairs, and I saw him just one instant. I thought he had come back."

"I thought I heard you wishing him good-night outside the door, Madame, and telling him that you would put everything right for him."

"Lovers' ears are quick," said Madame, with a smile, which showed Edith that she had aroused the hereditary temper of the D'Aurilliacs; a notoriously bad one.

"There are no lovers' ears here, Madame," said Edith. "It is useless to fence. You know as much as I can tell you. My cousin Lumberton proposed to me just now, and I have vowed that I would sooner take the veil or starve myself to death than see him again."

"This decision must be reconsidered, mademoiselle," said Madame d'Aurillac.

"In my coffin, then," said Edith.

"Mademoiselle is doubtless aware that the match has been made up between the two families."

"That is utterly false," replied Edith.

"I have it in black and white in your mother's own

hand," said the French schoolmistress. And we must remember that she believed that she was speaking the truth and doing her duty.

"It is impossible!"

"But it is true, Mademoiselle. It is very easy to see why it is true. In France it is said by English tellers of falsehood that the majority of French ladies have attachments after they are married. It is false, at least with regard to the Court of his Majesty of France, Henri V. (as for Orleanists, Bonapartists, Republicans, all things are possible with them). But the worst detractors of our country always say of French girls that they are carefully watched and guarded until they leave the cloister or the pension for an establishment. After that the Lady Superior or the lady of the pension is not considered answerable. The husband is answerable then, and that is the reason why French husbands are the most attentive of all."

"What is all this to me, Madame?"

"Thus much, mademoiselle," replied Madame d'Aurillac, glowering at her, "if I had known as much about you as I do now, I would never have admitted you into my house."

"What do you mean by that?" said Edith, turning deadly pale, but still perfectly courageous. She saw herself brought to bay with Madame d'Aurillac, and determined to fight.

"I hardly like to say," replied Madame.

"Pray do not spare me."

"If I had known before that there had been a scandal about you with that M. Holmsdale, I would never have had you here. If it got abroad it would ruin me. Great Heaven, a clandestine correspondence!"

Edith staggered to the wall and leant against it. Old D'Aurillac eyed her scientifically to see if she was going to fall, but perceiving that she was not, unrolled some more cotton, and went on at her crochet like Clotho.

"Are you going to speak, mademoiselle?" she said at last; and Edith turned a ghastly face towards her.

"Did my father and mother tell you this unhappy business?"

"It is quite true, then," said Madame, taking up a missed stitch. "No, or I would never have had you here

at all. It was your treacherous viper of a maid who told me, and gave me proofs in black and white, long after you came here, for five francs. I make inquiries of all young ladies. She is a wicked viper, that girl. You were so kind and so good to her, and she betrays you not once to your father, but twice to me. Is it true? But I know it is, for you lean against the wall."

Edith roused herself. "Madame," she said, "there was a complication with Mr. Holmsdale."

"Which now is in the possession of an infuriated maid-servant," hissed out Madame d'Aurillac, "who may ruin the character of my establishment by telling your story. Come, mademoiselle, no more words. This match with Lord Lumberton is fixed on by your parents. I have told Lord Lumberton to call and renew his proposals in a week. If they are not answered satisfactorily then, I must take means to vindicate the honour of my establishment at whatever cost. Go to your room, mademoiselle."

"Madame," said Edith before she went, "I have only to stay a few weeks with you: could you not let me talk about this with my parents?"

"You will find them as inexorable as I am, made-moiselle. Your cousin's visits here have been admitted in the most open manner, and this is not a *bureau de mariage*."

On the 11th of April, Lady Hornbury received the following telegram :—

"D'Aurillac, Rue St. Honoré, Paris, to Lady Hornbury, Portland Place, London. Come instantly. Frightful trouble about Edith."

"What on earth is the matter now?" said Sir John.

"I can't conceive," said Lady Hornbury. "Edith must be ill. I must hurry away. Put off the ball."

And so we have got round to the beginning of the story again.

We must, however, leave Lady Hornbury to go to Paris, and stay in London with Sir John for a short time. Sir John took his ride in the Park very comfortably in spite of Madame d'Aurillac's telegram, he not believing that anything very great was the matter. During his ride he met with an old friend who inquired after his wife, and on being told that she was gone to Paris, asked Sir John to come and take dinner with him. Sir John declined, on the ground that his lawyer

was coming to dine with him, and to discuss very particular business. "Indeed," he said, "old Compton is so very urgent and mysterious that he makes me a trifle uneasy: his news is very disagreeable, because he says that he will only discuss it after dinner."

"That looks bad," said his old friend, laughing. "I'll bet you five pounds that you have lost some money."

"I suppose I have," said Sir John. "I shall sell that horse and groom yonder. What will you give me for them?"

"I'll take the horse," said his old friend, "but I won't have the groom. You and your wife have an ugly trick of making your servants so comfortable that they are discontented everywhere else."

So they parted, and Sir John went home to dinner at six, the hour in which he delighted, but at which he never was allowed to dine when Lady Hornbury was at home. Mr. Compton was very punctual, but was evidently very serious; and before dinner was over Sir John had calculated his losses at about from ten to twenty thousand pounds. When the servants were out of the room, and Mr. Compton proposed business, that

gentleman looked so very grave that Sir John thought he should be well out of it with fifty thousand.

"Now, frowner, how much is it?" said Sir John, laughing. "How much is it? Put a name to the figure, and have it over."

"To what figure, Sir John?"

"To the figure of the sum I have lost. You look so black that I have put it at fifty thousand pounds. Is it the colliery?"

"The colliery is doing splendidly, Sir John. The sixty-fathom level has been struck, and the seam is seven feet thick. But——"


"What is it, then?"

"Sir John, did you ever hear of your brother, Sir Thomas's, domestic life?"

"Yes," said Sir John.

"Do you remember a certain Marchioness de Toul?"

"And poor Tom's connexion with her? Certainly. She left her husband for him, you know, and there was a fearful scandal. Tom fought the Marquis and was wounded, but he and the Marchioness did not live long together after she was divorced from her husband. She



was a violent and reckless woman, and became more violent and reckless after the loss of her good name. She died in a religious house, and poor Tom broke his heart over her desertion of him, for, with all his faults, he was a most affectionate fellow. I knew my brother so well that I am perfectly sure that she left him through no fault of his. I feel certain he would have made her every reparation in his power. As you yourself know, three thousand a year was paid to her under his will out of the estates."

"That is all true, Sir John, but I fear that he married her."

"Then why on earth did he keep his marriage secret?"

"He was not proud of it," said Mr. Compton. "It was a discreditable affair from beginning to end. She found that by her conduct she had lost all claim upon society, and she led him a terrible life, accusing him, perhaps with reason, of having cut her off from the world she loved so well. She got terribly anxious about her future state—superstitiously so. She left him to enter a religious house at Amiens."

"Yes," said Sir John.

"I fear," said Mr. Compton, "that he had married her before she left him : in fact, I *know* it."

"Good Heaven !" exclaimed Sir John.

"Yes ; and I fear that, out of mere spite to him and to his family, she concealed the fact that she had a son by him in that religious house. Such is apparently the case, however, and according to the other party's statements, that same son is alive."

"This is too monstrous to be true !" said Sir John.

"I don't know what to make of it," said Mr. Compton. "You never can reckon on an angry woman. It would seem that she left with the Lady Superior at her death a packet which was not to be opened for twenty-four years. This trust was handed from one Lady Superior to another, and was opened last year only. It contains, according to the other party, the proofs of her marriage and of the birth of this boy, which the other party have verified and are prepared to bring into court to-morrow. The other party have a terrible case, and Watson and Hicks are about the most respectable and safe firm in London."

"Then I have never been Sir John Hornbury at

all?" said Sir John, with a coolness which utterly astonished Mr. Compton.

"If their story is right," said Mr. Compton. "We have got to see about that."

"What became of this boy?"

"He was given over to the Jesuits, and was brought up at Stonyhurst. His mother provided for him partly with the nine thousand pounds which she had drawn from the estate in three years, and partly from her own property, which was a very good one. The Jesuits were honest stewards for the boy, according to Watson and Hicks, and although he refused to become a priest, the young man is pretty well off."

"Do you believe this story?"

Mr. Compton did not speak one word, but shook his head.

"Ruin?" said Sir John, quietly.

"It looks very much like it," said Mr. Compton. "I have been busy about the thing without troubling you, and I cannot at present see that we have a leg to stand on. But I come to the strangest part of the whole story. This young man will make any compromise which you please on your own terms; will leave

you in possession of the estates and title for your life ; will do anything you can suggest, on one condition."

" You amaze me. What is his condition ?"

" The hand of Miss Edith."

" Like his impudence," exclaimed Sir John, " to ask Edith to marry him before she has seen him. Why, Compton," he went on, almost violently, " if Edith were to offer to save me by such an unnatural match, I would refuse my consent in such terms as would render a renewal of the offer impossible. I would sooner live in a garret on bread than consent to such an arrangement. And Edith, my own daughter, do you think that she would degrade herself by marrying a man she did not love ? You know her better, Compton,"

" I do, Sir John, and I know you pretty well also. Of course neither of you would consent for an instant—only——"

" We shall have nothing then," said Sir John, " if this be true. My poor Mary, my poor Mary !"

" You will have Lady Hornbury's fortune, Sir John, five hundred a year."

" Aye, but he will want that. I must be £300,000 in his debt."

"It is settled on herself."

"Aye, but I will make her give it to him—every penny; she never disobeyed me yet, and she will not now."

Mr. Compton looked at his old friend with eyes which were brightened with admiration. "And this," he thought, "is the man whom the world calls mean in money matters, and jealous of his young wife?" "Sir John," he continued aloud, "I have something to tell you which will surprise you more than anything, my dear old friend. This young man has told Watson in confidence, and Watson has told *me* in confidence, that he not only knows Miss Edith, but is absolutely certain that he gained her affections eight months ago when she was staying with her aunt. Mr. Holmsdale says——"

"What!" cried Sir John.

"Mr. Holmsdale—by-the-bye, I forgot to tell you that the young gentleman who claims to be Sir Richard Hornbury goes by the name of Holmsdale, which the Jesuits gave him (they seem to have given him none of their evil ways, for he is behaving very well). Mr. Holmsdale says that he is absolutely certain that his attentions would not be disagreeable to Miss Edith, and

should his claim, on examination, be allowed by you, he asks you to put the question to the young lady herself."

"Why, Compton," said Sir John, solemnly, striking his hand on the table, "Lady Hornbury and I sent that young man to the right-about with a flea in his ear eight months ago. I believe Edith did care for him, though she behaved splendidly, sir; nobly."

"Of that I have no doubt," said Mr. Compton. "Now the question is, supposing all things go wrong with us, will you——?"

"You must ask her mother about that. If Edith really cares for the man, I would drop my title and live quietly at Huntly Bank on a thousand a year. I should be sorry to lose my servants and horses, but Mary could go into society as well as Mrs. Hornbury as she could as Lady Hornbury. No, if she cares for this man, and he is really the man——"

"Of which we are not sure as yet," interrupted Mr. Compton.

"Of which we are not sure as yet," repeated Sir John; "I would do anything I could for peace. For, Compton, we must not take this into court without a very good case; a better one than we have at present.

I am not going to throw £100,000 into Watson and Hicks' lap, and leave you unpaid."

"I'd fight the matter for you if you were bankrupt to-morrow, Sir John," exclaimed Mr. Compton.

"I have not the least doubt of it at all, you obstinate old man. Now I will go to bed and sleep over it. I should like to see this Holmsdale. Have you any idea whether he knew of this when he first knew my daughter?"

"Yes," said Mr. Compton, "as Watson pointed out to me, he had been to them about his claim before he ever saw her. His affection for her is utterly disinterested. When he got his dismissal from her he waited to see if he could see her again, and win her affections entirely without letting her know the fearful power in his hands. Watson says—and Watson knows young men pretty well—that Mr. Holmsdale will not move in the matter at all during your life, unless Miss Edith marries some one else. That is Watson's opinion. I am of opinion that he might if he was to find a young lady more accessible than Miss Edith, but that is all guess-work. Has Miss Edith any predilections in another quarter?"

"That good ass Lumberton seems smitten," said Sir John, "but I don't think old D'Aurilliac has given him much chance. Good night."

We must now leave Sir John to his own thoughts, and take flight to Paris, where the most terrible events were taking place. Lady Hornbury got to the Hôtel Meurice by two o'clock in the day, and by half-past two she was in the salon of Madame d'Aurilliac, in the Rue St. Honoré, awaiting that lady's pleasure with deep anxiety. She had not asked for Edith, considering it wiser to see the duenna herself. It is worthy of note that Lady Hornbury had been thinking matters over and had come to the conclusion that Edith was not ill. Having allayed her maternal fears on this point without the least foundation, she had travelled on alone, and by thinking about her sea-sickness, the rumbling of the railway, and her postponed ball, she had arrived in Paris extremely cross; and was just nourishing a mortal hatred against Madame d'Aurilliac for having telegraphed instead of writing more fully, when that good lady entered the room in full war paint and feathers, looking daggers. Lady Hornbury saw that there was going to be a fight, and was determined that

she would not be the last to begin it. The conversation was carried on in French, which was greatly to Madame d'Aurillac's advantage. But then Lady Hornbury had a great advantage in not understanding the most stinging of Madame's points, and so preserving a coolness which deserted that lady at one period of the conversation.

"How do you do, Madame, and how is my daughter Edith? May I ask the reason of this mysterious telegram, and whether my daughter is ill?"

"I am not in the least degree aware of the state of your daughter's health, Madame?"

"Would you be kind enough to explain yourself, Madame?"

"Certainly. Your daughter left here five days ago."

"And where is she gone, if you please?" said Lady Hornbury.

"Into Burgundy."

"With your leave, Madame?"

"No, Madame, without my knowledge. I have nourished a viper in my bosom which I was weak enough not to expel."

"If you allude to my daughter as a viper, Madame, you forget *yourself*; and as for expelling her, she seems to have expelled *herself*. Are any further explanations convenient?"

"I have been most grossly deceived, yet I have borne everything. Madame, when I took your daughter into my house, did you say a word about the clandestine correspondence with Holmsdale?"


"Certainly not," said Lady Hornbury. "It was no business of yours: and what you choose to call a clandestine correspondence was limited to a single letter from her, in which she forbade Mr. Holmsdale to speak to her."

"Madame, her late maid tells quite another story," said Madame d'Aurillac.

"If Madame chooses to believe the word of a discharged and most unprincipled servant in preference to mine, I can only pity Madame: my daughter is incapable of a mean or underhanded action."

"I think that you will change your opinion of Madame Rocroy directly," said Madame d'Aurillac.

"Madame Rocroy? I never heard of the woman," said Lady Hornbury.



"Your daughter Edith is now Madame Rocroy," said Madame d'Aurillac. "She was married four days ago secretly at the Mairie of this arrondissement, and afterwards at the Carmelite chapel in the Rue de Brissac, and at the Protestant church in the Rue d'Aguesseau."

Though Madame d'Aurillac said this while she was looking straight into the eyes of Lady Hornbury, the Englishwoman never flinched or changed colour. Her mouth was as dry as dust, and her heart going wildly, but she never moved a muscle before the Frenchwoman. "Not before her," she thought, "not before that woman."

"And who," she asked, "is the gentleman whom Madame has selected for my son-in-law?"

"Madame is kind enough to throw the blame on me. I thank Madame very much indeed for allowing me to admit a viper to my house, and then throwing the blame of what has happened on me."

"Now, my dear Madame," said Lady Hornbury, who by this time had managed to moisten her dry mouth and get her heart a little quiet. "We do not want any more vipers, if you please; we have had vipers enough."

I must ask you civilly to give me an account of this matter from beginning to end, first requesting you to give me your honour as a D'Aurillac that my daughter was married as you say."

"Madame de Rocroy," said Madame d'Aurillac, "has made a marriage which I should have recommended myself had it been sanctioned by your ladyship. M. de Rocroy is a gentleman in every way worthy of the best woman in France, and of fortune, not large, but good. He is a gentleman high in favour with his Majesty Henri V., as these jewels will show. It would seem that his majesty condescended to take interest in the love affairs of M. de Rocroy, and knew what was going on, for these jewels have arrived only to-day from Frohsdorf, as a bridal present for Madame Rocroy. Here are the jewels, my lady; perhaps you will take charge of them."

"Thank you," said Lady Hornbury, coolly. "I may as well take them until my daughter arrives in England: they are very fine jewels; indeed, I think that I will wear them myself until my daughter, Madame ——— what name did you say?"

"Rocroy."

"Ah! Rocroy claims them. And now, my dear creature, how did all this come about? I am really dying to know."

"Insular wretch," thought Madame d'Aurillac; "she cares nothing for her daughter."

There was a wild, nearly bursting heart behind Lady Hornbury's broad bosom which told another tale though; and one sentence was ringing in the ear of her mind continually. "It will kill John; it will kill John;" but she faced the Frenchwoman as though she had no fox under her tunic.

"In consequence of your directions with regard to the visits of Lord Lumberton as the fiancé of Miss Hornbury——"

"None such were given," said Lady Hornbury, interrupting.

"I beg Madame's pardon. Here is Madame's letter, in which you told me that his visits were a family affair."

"I wish I had written in French," said Lady Hornbury.

"I wish you had, Madame. I suppose that with that letter in my hand I may be excused from blame."

"Go on with your tale, and we will talk about blame

afterwards," said Lady Hornbury, who felt a trifle guilty, though she would have died sooner than show it.


"In consequence of that letter I admitted Lord Lumberton's visits; nay, after I had discovered the affair Holmsdale, I encouraged them."

Lady Hornbury nodded, and sneezed in the most unconcerned manner, and said, "Go on, Madame, for you begin to interest me."

"I encouraged his visits, knowing what I knew, and at last he proposed to her. She refused him with scorn, and he told me of it. I went to her and told her that in consequence of the affair Holmsdale she was destined to marry that young man by her parent's orders."

"Oh, you told her *that*, did you, Madame?" said Lady Hornbury.

"Yes, Madame; I considered that I was acting under your instructions, and I told her that. I told her that she must give Lord Lumberton a favourable answer in five days. On the second day after that she was gone, and at night the young Comte de Millefleurs came and told me all that had happened:



he had acted as groomsman, and his sister as bridesmaid."

"How very nice of them," said Lady Hornbury.

"You have not got such a thing as a hairpin, have you, Countess? for I slept in the train last night, and my hair is coming down. Now about this young Millefleurs. He is quite respectable?"

"He is gentleman-in-waiting to his Majesty Henri V."

"Ah! we call him Comte de Chambord; I respect your prejudices; he will claim his title as King of France some day, and I wish he may get it." (This vulgarity was utterly lost on Madame d'Aurillac.)

"Well, Madame, if you will send me a note of my daughter's expenses here to my hotel to-night, I will discharge it. May I ask, had you any suspicions of the attentions of M. de Rocroy towards my daughter?"

"Madame's memory is short. I thought that his attentions were directed to your daughter's maid, and so I discharged her; she was only the go-between subsidized by Rocroy."

"Ah! I see," said Lady Hornbury. "Well, Madame, I suppose that neither of us has much cause to talk about this matter. I do not want to talk about it, and

I should think you did not either. *You had better not.* If you hold your tongue, I will hold mine : if you speak, I will ruin you ; you depend on your pension ; and affairs of this kind, so grossly misconducted as this has been by you, would ruin a dozen pensions."

So Lady Hornbury got into her fiacre and went to the Hôtel Meurice after her great victory. Madame d'Aurillac would have given a year's income had she seen her in her bedroom, alone with her maid, an old friend, who had been her nurse in times gone by.

"Pinner," said Lady Hornbury, throwing herself in a chair, "I have borne up before that woman, but I am going to die."


"What is the matter, my lady?" said the maid, kneeling before her.

"I never can face Sir John. And oh, my Edith! my Edith! dearer than ever, why could you not have trusted your mother?"

"Is Miss Edith dead?" asked the frightened maid.

"No, Pinner ; but she has married a Frenchman, and deceived us all. Oh, Madame d'Aurillac, I will remember *you* !"

Pinner got her mistress to bed as soon as possible.



Lady Hornbury wrote a letter to her daughter, poste restante, Dijon, full of tenderness and kindness, only regretting that Edith had not confided in her, and putting her entirely in the right about Lord Lumberton's attentions. "I will not conceal from you the fact, my darling, that we should have liked you to marry Lord Lumberton, but that old idiot, Madame d'Aurillac, mistook everything. As for this Rocroy of yours, give him a box on the ears for me, and tell him that I will give him another when I meet him."

That was the way that Lady Hornbury got out of the difficulty: was she a wise woman, or was she not? I think that she was wise. She said to Pinner before she cried herself to sleep, "She shall love me still, though that miserable old Frenchwoman made her distrust me. We must be off by the first train to Calais, and I must break it to Sir John. That woman d'Aurillac will send in her bill to-night. Wait up and pay it. It will be 10,000 francs, or thereabouts. Don't haggle; I'll give her *her* receipt some day."

Sir John slept over Mr. Compton's astonishing communication, and he came to this conclusion, that it was in all probability perfectly true.

In the first place, it was obvious that Compton believed it, and Compton was the first solicitor in London. It was also obvious that Watson believed it, and Watson was the last man in the world to take up a case unless he was as good as certain. Compton *might* still find something not known as yet, but it seemed highly improbable. Sir John quietly acquiesced in the matter as far as he was concerned: the worst thing was the breaking it to his wife.

"How will she take it?" he repeated to himself a hundred times over. "There will be one explosion when I tell her the truth about Compton's story, and another when I order her to give up her fortune. I wonder how she will go through with it. Poor sweetheart, she has never seen trouble yet."

Here she was, late the next day, fresh from Paris with a new bonnet and a frank smile. "Now, John," she said, "you may kiss me, but if you rumple my bonnet you rumple two pound four, and so I warn you. And how are you, my dear?"

"I am as well as ever I was, I think," said Sir John. "I am wonderfully well. But I will come up to your

dressing-room while you change your dress for dinner, for I have some very heavy news to tell you."

"I suppose that you have heard about half the truth, John," she said. "Come up and tell your story. Then I will tell mine. Any one to dinner?"

"Mr. Compton."

"The very man," she said. "Now, my dear, tell me your story while I am dressing."

"Mary, I fear we are utterly ruined."

"How?—In money?" she asked, combing her hair.

"I fear so."

"How very curious. Have you been speculating?"

"No. I am, it would seem, not Sir John Hornbury at all."

"Don't say another word," she cried. "I know what is the matter. Tom was married, and had a son."

"My darling, I fear that it is only too true."

"I *knew* it," she said, looking at him triumphantly, and plying her hair-brushes. "I knew it as soon as you spoke. Tell me all about it, and don't keep me waiting. I was certain it was that when you spoke."

Sir John sat down and told her the whole matter, as Compton had related it, from beginning to end.

"Well," she said, "surprises will never cease in the world. At all events, we have my fortune, and we can be very comfortable on that."

"Mary," said Sir John.

"Yes, dear."

"If this man is proved to be my nephew, I shall owe him about £300,000."

"I am afraid so ; but we never can pay it."

"We can pay him your £15,000."

"If you think it necessary to your honour, of course I will obey you ; but it leaves us penniless. I suppose that we ought to give it. I will tell you what I can do better than most women : I can give music lessons."

"You are not afraid of the future, then, without a penny ?"

"Not in the least. I have got you, John, and it will go hard but what I will keep you. I am not afraid so long as you are with me."

"Come here, you golden woman, and sit on my knee," said Sir John.

She came, and their cheeks were together, and her brown hair was mingling with his grey hair, and they sat in the silence of love.

"Then you do not mind it?" he asked.

"I don't see that there is anything to mind in it," she said. "I like money and society more than most, but I love you better than all. We are not the first people who have lost their money, and we sha'n't be the last. I should have liked my fifteen thousand pounds for your sake, but it must go if it turns out that we have been living false lives."

"Edith could make everything straight for us," said Sir John.

"How?"

"The claimant is that young man Holmsdale who was in love with Edith. He will never move in the matter during my lifetime if Edith marries him. He says that he has won her love, could the match be brought about. And, by the way, how is Edith, for I had forgotten to ask you?"

"Now this *is* checkmate," said Lady Hornbury. "How is Edith? Why, Edith is as well as a bride can expect to be. Edith, living in that atmosphere of lies which every Frenchwoman carries about with her, has been frightened by old D'Aurillac into running

away with a French count. Edith is now Madame de Rocroy."

"Is he a gentleman?" asked Sir John.

"Oh yes; a man about Frohsdorf. By-the-bye, here are the jewels which the Comte de Chambord sent her."

"She might have done worse," said Sir John. "Has he money?"

"He has enough," said Lady Hornbury.

"Well, then, under the circumstances, we really must not grumble," said Sir John. "Now come, let us go down and meet old Compton."

Old Compton was waiting for them, and dinner was waiting for all three of them; but old Compton wanted a few words on business before they went into the dining-room.

"Sir John," he said, "you have, I suppose, put her ladyship in possession of the facts?"

"I have," said Sir John.

"My lady," said Mr. Compton, "I have been at work ever since I spoke to Sir John, and I have to tell your ladyship that we have not a leg to stand on; those Jesuits are good men of business."

“Well, we have prepared our minds. We are beggars.”

“Sir John told you the terms of the compromise?”

“Yes,” said Lady Hornbury, “but such a compromise happens to be impossible. My daughter Edith has married a Frenchman. She is now Madame de Rocroy.”

“Madame de *what!*” shouted old Compton.

“Madame de Rocroy,” said Lady Hornbury. “My daughter’s husband’s name is Richard de Rocroy.”

“Have the goodness to bring me a glass of wine,” said old Compton. “I am faint.”

Lady Hornbury rang the bell violently, and, not waiting for the footman, hurried Mr. Compton and Sir John into the dining-room, where she poured out a glass of wine.

“Don’t you see what you have done?” said Mr. Compton, after he had drunk his wine.

“Not in the least,” said Lady Hornbury.

“Don’t you see that your daughter has married Holmsdale, the very man we wanted her to marry? This Holmsdale, whom I believe to be your nephew, always has taken the title of Rocroy in France. Your

daughter has married her cousin, and we are uncommonly well out of it. Sir John, do you forget everything when you forget that the family name of the De Toulz was Rocroy?"

"I had completely forgotten it," said Sir John. And so they went to dinner and discussed matters very quietly.

"How could this astounding result have come about?" said Sir John.

"It is perfectly plain to me now that we have to thank the folly and stupidity of the Comtesse d'Aurillac for this," said Lady Hornbury. "She put things in a false light to Edith, and Edith was foolish enough to believe that we should force her into a marriage with Lumberton. Well now, what do you say about my going to Dijon and taking Mr. Compton?"

"Or what do you say to my going to Dijon and taking Lady Hornbury?" said Mr. Compton.

"Well, you must fight it out on the way as to who is the commander-in-chief," said Sir John, "but you had better both go. Compton, you have full power to act for me with this man. I feel sure that I shall like him. Mary, my love, what do you say to dropping the title, and becoming Mrs. Hornbury?"

"I think on the whole that it would be the best thing to do for Edith's sake. The world will say some hard things of us—will say, for example, that we discovered the justice of the claim, and sacrificed our daughter to save ourselves, but we, knowing otherwise, can laugh at that. However, nothing can be done until I have taken Mr. Compton to Dijon."

Edith had written a letter to her mother, which had crossed that lady's; she was therefore profoundly astonished, as she was sitting alone deeply anxious, to see her mother come sailing into the room, and saying, "My sweet Edith, get me some tea. I am as tired as if I had walked all the way. Where is your cousin?"

"My cousin, mamma?"

"I should say your husband. Don't you know that you have married your cousin, and are Lady Hornbury? Come here and kiss me, you curious child. So he has never told you."

Meanwhile Mr. Compton and Edith's husband had been in conversation. At first that young gentleman refused emphatically to touch the estates, titles, or anything else, save a decent allowance from Sir John. The most that he could be got to do was this: he was to be

received as a nephew of Sir John's and heir to the baronetcy at Sir John's death, drawing such money as should be decided on from the estates. The marriage was to be immediately announced, and Sir John was at once to be told to do so.

"Now, my dear sir, I want to ask you to do a certain thing very much."

"I will do it," said Richard Hornbury.

"*Go at once, to-morrow, to Frohsdorf*, and take your wife with you. You are pretty sure of a welcome there."

"I see," said the bridegroom, laughing.

People in London have got over the matter very easily. Sir John appeared in the Park on his famous horse, and told everybody his own version of the affair. His daughter, Edith, had married her cousin Dick, abroad, and her mother had gone over to see her. The bride and bridegroom were staying with the Comte de Chambord at Frohsdorf: the jewels which the bride had received from the legitimist aristocracy were very handsome, monstrous handsome: the girl had won everybody's heart over there.

The world was a little puzzled about this new

nephew of Sir John's, and also rather amazed at the suddenness of the marriage; but there came half a dozen other things to wonder about, and so the postponement of Lady Hornbury's ball was soon forgotten.

AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF CHARLES MORDAUNT.

"LORD BARNSTAPLE presents his compliments to the Reverend James Mordaunt, and will do himself the honour to wait on him at one P.M., on Thursday next, the 27th of July, to discuss parochial matters. An answer would oblige."

"Crowshoe Castle, 25/7/53."

This document looks innocent and harmless at first, but it fell like a thunderbolt in the quiet household of the Reverend James Mordaunt. No one was with him when he received it but his daughter Alice; he at once handed it to her, and announced his intention of selling out the only property he had in the world, 1,200*l.* 3 per Cents, and emigrating to western Canada.

"I don't think I would do that, pa," said Alice, "you are too old, my dear. Stay here and fight it out."

"I am only forty-five," returned the Reverend James, "and I am as strong as a horse, but now that this young prig of a nobleman has come to back up the Rector and the Archdeacon, I had better go at once than stay too long."

"We don't know that he is a prig, pa," said Alice.

"He took a 'first,' " said the Reverend James, "and I know what that means with a nobleman."

"Well, my dear," said Alice, "you would have taken one if you could have afforded the coaching."

"It don't matter," said the Reverend James. "His mind is poisoned against me, and I will not stand it any longer."

"You don't *know* that his mind is poisoned against you," urged Alice. "Hear the man."

"I suppose I must," said the Reverend James, with a vexed air. "But I'll tell you what I will do. I will walk over to the Bishop this afternoon, get a bed there, and come back to-morrow morning."

"Could not you borrow farmer Willesden's horse?" asked Alice; "fourteen miles is a long walk."

"I can't borrow his horse, for to-morrow is market day, and he will want it. He would lend it to me and

say he did not want it, but I am obliged to him too much already. God bless him! How much money have we?"

"Thirteen and sixpence."

"Give me five, old girl," said the Reverend James, "because, if the palace is full, I must sleep at the inn. Where is Charles?"

"Oh! I forgot to tell you. Charles has got three days' work with the railway surveyors, at seven-and-sixpence a day. His mathematics come in very well there: I wish it would lead to something permanent."

"Is there anything owing in the village?" asked the Reverend James.

"One-and-sixpence to the butcher," said Alice; "but I will slip round and pay that."

"Do so, old girl, and if Charles comes home before I am back, give him my love, and tell him where I am gone." And so the reverend gentleman put two half-crowns in his pocket, took his stick, and walked stoutly away to the Bishop.


The Reverend James Mordaunt was a curate of Sprowston, with a salary of 120*l.* a year, and a private income of 35*l.* arising from the 1,200*l.* before spoken of.

On this income he had married, and his wife had died three years afterwards, leaving him to bring up a boy and a girl, Charles and Alice, in the most grinding poverty. Charles was now twenty-one, and his sister nineteen, both of them marvels of beauty and intelligence. Mr. Mordaunt had nothing to give them but learning, example, and love, and he gave them all these three things without stint. Too hopelessly poor to give much in charity, he was more deeply loved by the poor than any man for miles round; and his son and daughter shared the love which was their father's due, and they deserved it. Knowing absolutely nothing of the outside world, except what their father had told them from old recollections, they grew up perfectly innocent and contented, supposing that other poor people's lives were much like their own.

Their father was a tremendous power in their little world; there was no appeal from him. The magistrates made room for his shabby coat on the bench, and were relieved when he was gone, taking his handsome, inexorable face and his withering oratory with him. The boldest farmer grew pale if he appeared to eat his eighteen-pennyworth at the market

ordinary; they wondered among one another whose turn it was for a few stinging and never-to-be-forgotten words. The lash of the man's satire brought blood, and blood which took a long time in healing; but the man's life was so blameless, so noble, and so pure, that, as years went on, the very stupidest farmers began to see that he was living consistently that life which he discoursed on every Sunday from the pulpit—the life of Christ. He made them fear him first, they got to love him afterwards.

He came suddenly from Oxford with a young wife, and he at once began fighting everybody; he took up the case of the agricultural poor, and fought the farmers more like a fiend than a decent English clergyman. He had no money, which was a disadvantage; and he had less than no influence, which was possibly worse. But he fought on for all that through thick and thin. It was a long and dark night for him after his wife died, and when he had to wake up in the morning and find she was not by his side, but in the cold churchyard outside the window. It was a long and bitter struggle to rear those two poor children without any money at all: but the man won. People generally—lords,



squires, magistrates, farmers—began to be aware of a pale, handsome, and very poor man, with twice the brains and three times the debating power of any of them, who went up and down their little world, not *pleading* for the poor, but *ordering* that the law of the land should be put in force in their favour.

The poor, as a matter of course, took to him at once; the farmers were longer in winning, for they said that he made mischief, as he certainly did. But one day at the market dinner farmer Willesden, his chief opponent at first, saw that, although he had often “caught it” from Mr. Mordaunt, yet he always, somehow, found Mr. Mordaunt in the right; and that Mr. Mordaunt was as game to stand between landlord and tenant as he was to stand between farmer and labourer. In short, Mr. Mordaunt had won the respect of the farmers; and such is the bull-headed persistency of those gentlemen, that if you once gain their confidence you must be an utter fool to lose it again.

When he first came into the parish, the lord of the manor, Lord Barnstaple, was very old, and was devoting the remainder of a very busy and well-spent life to politics; when he was not in his place in the House of

Lords he was at Cannes. The Bishop was also very old and very cynical, having been throughout all his life a politician far more than an ecclesiastic, a writer of pamphlets more than a preacher. The Rector of Sprowston was also infirm and quite unfit for his duties. Lord Barnstaple was a very strong Whig, and it was to his influence that the Bishop owed his position, while the infirm Rector was also a Whig and an old college friend of Lord Barnstaple's. What between Whiggery and old age, not one of the three interfered in any way with Mr. Mordaunt; but time brought changes, and at the time when Mr. Mordaunt had got everybody with him, the old Rector died. He sent for Mr. Mordaunt on his death-bed, and urged him to persevere in his present course as long as he lived.

"I have wasted my life in politics, Mordaunt," he said, "or I would have done what you are doing. I earnestly beg of you to persevere. Remember my words, and don't give up. One of the reasons why I am loth to die even now is, that you have got a worthless man and tyrant coming. I could not stop it; Lord Barnstaple wishes to be rid of the man, and make him hold his tongue; so he has shelved him here. I have extorted a promise from Lord Barnstaple that you are

not to be removed, save at your own wish—that is all which I could do. Be as wise as a serpent, and as harmless as a dove. Good-bye, my dear Mordaunt: I wish I was young again, and able to stand beside you. You will find that I have left you my private sacramental plate; take it as an earnest of what might have been if I had been younger. Good-bye.”

So the good old fellow died, and the Rev. L. Easy reigned in his stead. Mr. Easy was the greatest of all bear-leaders of ancient or modern times: for winking at, or ignoring, vice among rich young men he was a Petronius Arbiter: in expanding on the virtues of a protecting family he was a Horace. The worst of it was, that he was a dunce; and when the pestilent system of competitive examination came in it was discovered that, although the famous Letmedown Easy could still conceal or palliate the vices of his pupils, he was utterly unable to get them through their examinations. He found his old trade going from under his feet and into the hands of honest men; he had saved money, but it would never pay him to invest in the employment of coaches; he was as nearly as possible retiring from the trade when a job fell into his hands which enabled him

to retire with honour. The second son of Lord Barnstaple was requested to retire from Eton without further delay, and did so retire.

Lord Barnstaple was at Cannes when he heard of this terrible blow; but he wrote to the Bishop, and the Bishop, then very infirm, wrote that Easy was always the man in these cases. Lord Barnstaple sent Lord Edward Hemling to Mr. Easy with a letter, in which certain contingencies were mentioned if the lad could be got through his examination for the army. It has been said that the old nobleman promised him a thousand pounds and his next living; and it has also been said that when Lord Edward Hemling arrived, and was examined by the Rev. Mr. Easy, that the rev. gentleman scratched his head and told his wife that he did not half like the job. Encouraged by her, however, she being ten times more unscrupulous than himself, he undertook the matter. Then follows a very odd and dark story. A young man, a printer, was sentenced to six months' hard labour for stealing some papers two days before the examination. Duplicate proofs were taken, and only one set were found on the young man (now married and conducting a flourishing printing

business in Ontario); as to what had become of the other set the young man was most discreetly silent, and he did his six months with a joyous alacrity which won him the good opinion of every official in Coldbath Fields. In the meantime, Lord Edward had passed his examination, and had joined a regiment of the Foot-Guards, and after three months was requested to exchange for being drunk at mess. A meeting of the Guards' Club unanimously expelled him, and he shortly afterwards joined a West India regiment on the west coast of Africa; and, in spite of all that his hard-worked brother-officers could do for him by advice and assistance, he died of drink and fever.

Still Mr. Easy had fulfilled his bargain with Lord Barnstaple, and Lord Barnstaple was not a man who forgot. On the rector's death, Mr. Easy came into the living of Sprowston, and all the Lord Barnstaples in the world could not put him out of it. Besides, he knew things about Lord Edward which it was impossible to talk about in society, but about which there was nothing to prevent his talking now that he had got everything he could possibly get; he had, therefore, the whip-hand of Lord Barnstaple, and, having been a

rogue all his life, he would not scruple to use it if it suited his purpose. The only thing which kept Mr. Mordaunt's house over his head was this,—

Lord Bideford, the eldest son of Lord Barnstaple, was a very different man to his brother Lord Edward. He was by another mother. Lord Barnstaple had married, first, Lady Alice Barty, the beauty of a family which has given us some of our best statesmen, and by her he had Lord Bideford. A long time after her death, his lordship made a most imprudent marriage, and the less which is said about that the better; the offspring of this marriage was Lord Edward. Lord Bideford was a very silent young man, and no one seemed to know anything about him, save that he had taken a "first" at Oxford, and was very silent in Parliament. Now, in the course of nature, Lord Bideford would soon be Lord Barnstaple and master of Crowshoe. Mrs. Easy, who was fond of dress and show, was very anxious to have the *entrée* of that castle; and, as some rumours had reached her as to the fact that the young lord was not only very silent but very obstinate, she urged on her husband that it would be very impolitic to take ultimate measures with regard to Mr. Mordaunt until they had

gathered the opinions of Lord Bideford. Meanwhile she quite agreed to the plan of leading him the life of a dog, and making his resignation his own act: they could get a young man cheaper by sixty pounds, and that would enable her to go to London every year.

Mr. Mordaunt was a very mild High Churchman, and had introduced some extremely mild alterations in the church service, after a long consultation with the farmers; who, being every one of them Conservatives, gladly acquiesced in what he did when he pointed out to them that he was simply carrying out the directions of the Prayer-book, on which they pinned their faith. He shortened the services individually, although the actual length of them was greater than ever. He had a communion at eight o'clock every Sunday morning, which was well attended; and, in fact, did quietly and exactly what the Prayer-book told him to do. He made also, on the other hand, great friends with the dissenting minister (Wesleyan), and they had hot arguments in their walks as to what John Wesley would say if he knew that his followers had seceded from the establishment after his death. Then an Irish harvestman fell ill in his parish; and when Mr. Mor-

daunt found that he was a Roman Catholic, he borrowed farmer Willesden's horse and gig, drove to the nearest town where there was a Roman Catholic priest, and fetched him over in triumph in broad daylight, and insisted on his staying all night, asking one or two of the farmers, and his friend the dissenting minister, to meet him in the evening. The evening passed off in the most charming manner; though the Wesleyan minister afterwards told Mr. Mordaunt that he was vexed at not being able to hold his own in learning, with the man of the Establishment or the Romanist. Farmer Willesden was so taken with the Romanist, that he sent him a pair of spring chickens on Good Friday, in all innocence, thinking that it would be a delicate attention, under the impression that Good Friday was the great holiday of the Romish church.

Now all these lapsarian backslidings from grace were very soon told to the Rev. Letmedown Easy, by the admiring farmers. That they were abominable and audacious no one could deny; the question was, how to utilize them with Lord Bideford, and procure the removal of Mr. Mordaunt without shutting up Crowshoe

Castle? They could save sixty pounds a year by getting rid of Mr. Mordaunt.

The first question with this worthy pair was this: what *was* Lord Bideford? Lord Barnstaple was a shining light among the evangelicals, and it was notorious that his brother-in-law had practically appointed the last five bishops. He was too old to be taken into the calculations, however; and the question was, what were Lord Bideford's religious opinions? It was a very difficult question to answer. Lord Bideford certainly attended, with great diligence and regularity, the afternoon service at All Saints, Margaret Street; but he was also to be seen at Vere Street listening to Mr. Maurice, and he frequently preached at Field Lane: a most tiresome and puzzling young man! But Field Lane and his preaching there did the business. He might listen to Maconochie, Stopford Brooke—to any one, in short; but the fact of his preaching under the presidency of Lord Shaftesbury settled the question: the man was an evangelical, like his father.

Consequently the Rev. Letmedown Easy became violently evangelical, according to his view of evangelicism. The leader of that party in the church remon-

strated with him in an angry manner about what he did, and went so far as to tell him that he was persecuting a better man than himself. But Lord Bideford was silent; and so Mr. Easy saw Crowshoe Castle open to him.

However, the principal thing in hand was to force Mr. Mordaunt to resign. He began with the farmers, trying to undermine his influence with them. They at once burnt him in effigy on the village green, and, assisted by their hinds, howled outside his house so long, that Mr. Easy fled to the cellar for refuge. He failed with the farmers; but he had Farmer Willesden up at petty sessions for language likely to provoke a breach of the peace. The chairman fined Willesden five shillings, and he put two pounds in the poor-box. Willesden, meeting Mr. Easy outside the court, repeated the language, I regret to say, with adjectives. The chairman, Sir Pitchcroft Cockpole, said to Mr. Easy, afterwards, "You had better leave that man Mordaunt alone. He has been master here for a few years, and he is likely to remain master."

Mr. Easy's hands were, however, considerably strengthened by a new Archdeacon, a man by no means

of the "Grantly" type of archdeacon. He and Easy had more than once played into one another's hands, it was said, though that was extremely improbable, for the Archdeacon was one of the most cautious men in creation, and had only lost a bishopric by slightly rattling at the wrong time. He was a kinsman of Easy's, and was not best pleased at finding his kinsman there, for the ugly old story about Lord Edward's examination papers was still spoken of, and, like all untruths, was believed in. Two courses only were open to the Archdeacon, either to throw his kinsman overboard, or to back him up through thick and thin. After due thought, he chose the latter.

What induced Mr. Mordaunt just at this time to preach a sermon before his new Rector, airing his views as regarded the spiritual sovereignty of the Queen, no man can tell. It is enough that he did it, and that Mr. Easy requested him to hand over the original MS. in the vestry for immediate conveyance to the old Bishop. The old man read it in bed while Mr. Easy was taking lunch, and then called Mr. Easy to his bedside.

"This is a curious sermon, Mr. Easy," said the

Bishop; "and Mr. Mordaunt is a very curious man; but you had much better make friends with him than quarrel with him. You will never get on in that parish if you do."

Mr. Easy thought differently, and put every possible annoyance he could in Mr. Mordaunt's way, until that gentleman began to think of giving up the whole thing and emigrating. Two changes happened, however, which made him hang on—Lord Barnstaple and the old Bishop died within one week.

The new Bishop was an old friend of his, and when he went to the palace received him with open arms. On the occasion of his first visit Mr. Mordaunt said nothing at all about his troubles. Mr. Easy, however, saved him that trouble by stating his case to the new, young, and vigorous Bishop without delay. The new Bishop heard them with the greatest patience and attention, and afterwards said, "I cannot see myself that there is any case against him. You say that his continuation there is scandalous. As the French say, 'Voulez-vous préciser votre accusation?'"

That was very difficult, Mr. Easy said, after a few moments. "He associates with the farmers."

"That is very good," said the Bishop. "That is an old habit of my own."

"His son takes work in the fields, and takes money for it."

"Sooner than loaf, cheat, or beg," said the Bishop. "I am sorry that the son of an educated gentleman like Mordaunt should be brought so low; but the early Christians did that same thing. St. Paul was only a tent-maker, you know, Mr. Easy. Is there anything against the young man's character? Is he the sort of young man who would have come in your way in your former line of business, Mr. Easy?"

Mr. Easy, devoutly wishing the Bishop somewhere, replied that there was nothing against the young man in a moral point of view.

"Well," said the Bishop; "it is a most disgraceful scandal. Here is a man like Mordaunt, a man worth twenty such men as you or I, Mr. Easy, obliged to send his son into the harvest-field for a living. It is the most shameful thing I ever heard of."

So the Archdeacon and Mr. Easy took very little by their motion. Mr. Mordaunt came over to the Bishop by summons, and spent the day with him. They talked

over many old matters, and at the end Mr. Mordaunt asked the Bishop what he knew about the new Lord Barnstaple.

"Exactly nothing," said the Bishop. "I think that he is a terrible prig, and will probably assist Easy, who saved his half-brother from disgrace, and who was a nominee of Barnstaple's father. Meanwhile, go home, old friend, commit no indiscretions, and hold your own."

Things were exactly in this state when Mr. Mordaunt received the intimation of Lord Barnstaple's visit. He was very anxious about that visit, and, as we have seen before, walked away to his old friend, the Bishop, to consult him. The Bishop made him stay all night, and all the next day, and the next night. The Dean and the Precentor, cunning men when there was a kindly, Christian act to be done, begged of him, as a personal favour, to stay over the day and intone for the Precentor, who had a convenient cough. Mr. Mordaunt could intone with the best of them, and so he spent a whole happy day under the glorious old arches, doing service after service.

"I feel young again, Bishop," he said at night, when

they were going to bed ; " I will sing matins and go home."

And after matins away he went walking, and thinking what preparations Alice had been making for Lord Barnstaple, but not much caring, for the cathedral music was in his ears, and so he sang all the way.

He arrived in the afternoon, and, opening his own door, passed into the parlour. His daughter Alice was standing beside the chimneypiece, and with her was a tall and strong man, whom he knew well, the inspector of police.

Alice was ghastly pale, and was moistening her dry lips with her tongue.

" Papa," she said, " here is Inspector Morton, who has been waiting for you."

Mr. Mordaunt saw that something was very wrong, and he left off humming a Gregorian chant to say, " How do, Morton ? Come after me ? I don't think you gentlemen practise in the ecclesiastical courts. You will have to take me in execution for unpaid costs in the ecclesiastical court some day, but my time is not come yet."

" Papa," said Alice, " don't joke ; it is Charles."

"What has he been doing?" said Mr. Mordaunt.

"Oh, father, don't break down; he is arrested for burglary!"

"Charles arrested for burglary!" exclaimed Mr. Mordaunt, laughing. "No: this is very good—this is as good as a play. Easy will make something of this. Leave the room, old girl, and let me talk to the Inspector."

"What is this story, Inspector?" said Mr. Mordaunt, when his daughter was gone.

"Well, sir, I am sorry to tell you that Mr. Charles is in custody for attempted burglary at Barnstaple."

"But that is forty miles away," said Mr. Mordaunt, "and the whole thing is ridiculous."

"It looks so, sir; but he was watched into a door, and then out of the same door two hours after, and was captured."

"But, my good Inspector, this is perfect midsummer madness. My son is incapable of such an act."

The Inspector came close to Mr. Mordaunt and whispered in his ear. As he whispered to him Mr. Mordaunt's face grew more and more ashy pale, and at last he begged him to desist, and staggered to a chair

After a few minutes he raised his ghastly face to the Inspector's, and said, "I would sooner that it had been burglary than that."

"No doubt, sir," said the Inspector; "we know your principles about here, and we know Mr. Charles's principles also. There ain't two men more loved in these parts than you two. But you have not heard me out, sir. That Inspector Bryan is a fool, sir. I was over to Barum yesterday, and I went and see Master Charles, and he give me the office, and I went and got this."

There came a flush into Mr. Mordaunt's pale face as he looked at the little paper which I have noticed in the face of more than one middle-aged man. The lordly and imperial look of the young bridegroom is not more lordly than the look of the young grandfather. Mordaunt held his head higher than he had ever done since he led his bride out of church three-and-twenty years ago. What was Easy to him now? what was the Archdeacon? In his new pride they might go hang themselves.

"Now how did all this come out, Inspector?" said he.

"That is as you think, sir," said the Inspector.

"We must not leave her in a false position," said Mr. Mordaunt.

"Certainly not," said the Inspector.

"I will step round to the old man first, and tell him the truth," said Mr. Mordaunt. And the Inspector departed. Mr. Mordaunt went up to his daughter's room, and found her crying in bed. "Alice," he said, "you must listen to me."

"About Charles?"

"Yes, about Charles. Charles has been married for two months, without my knowledge."

"To Mary Willesden?"

"To the same young lady. I suppose he has done very wrong, but that is a matter of detail. He was caught trying to see her, but I will go over and make it all right for him to-morrow."

"I knew he loved her, father; but I did not think of this. Our Charles is an honest man, and we can hold up our heads before fifty Lord Barnstaples when he comes."

Mr. Mordaunt went round to Farmer Willesden's at once, and after a somewhat difficult interview the farmer agreed to go to Barum the next morning, to

scold Charles, and to bail him out. They went, but Charles had been discharged five hours previously, and was gone no one knew whither.

The next day came the following letter from Charles :—

“MY DEAR FATHER—

“I greatly regret that I have deceived you for the first time in my life ; and I ought, I suppose, to regret that I cannot regret it.


“My life was utterly unendurable. I had no opening, and no chance of any opening in the world. With the education of a gentleman I was leading the life of a clodhopper. Only one thing prevented me from enlisting in a dragoon regiment, and that was my love for Mary Willesden. She urged on me that I could never marry her if I turned soldier. I was at one time actually desperate ; I am so no longer, thanks to Tom Harvey.”

Mr. Mordaunt paused. “Tom Harvey,” he thought, “the miller’s son. Why, Tom Harvey has got a mill in Canada.”

“He was,” the letter went on, “Mary Willesden’s

cousin, as you know. He was a great friend of mine when we were boys together. He has done very well in Ontario, and is making his fortune. He came over here four months ago on commercial business, and I met him in Barnstaple.

“He asked me to come back with him to Canada ; but I demurred about leaving Mary. He then began to urge on me the plan of marrying her secretly and telling of it afterwards. He said that it often occurred in Canada and in the United States, that a young man would marry a young woman, and leave her with her mother until he had got a home for her. At last I determined to do so ; and one reason of my secrecy was, that I knew that you were in trouble with the Rector and the Archdeacon. We were married two months ago. Tom Harvey, whose time was out in England, returned from London to Barnstaple, and urged me more strongly than ever to come to Canada with him in a brig which is taking slates to Quebec. I consented ; but of course I had to tell Mary. She arranged to let me in quietly, and I went in and stayed for two hours. As I came out, the police got hold of me, and I should have been tried for burglary



if Tom Harvey and his aunt had not made it all right. Tom has paid my passage, and has lent me money. As for my darling wife, father, you and Alice must take care of her until I claim her. I regret to say that, if all goes well, you will find yourself a grandfather before I return. Now I must have your forgiveness; and, with love to Alice, I say good-bye, and God bless you!

“CHARLES MORDAUNT.”

Mr. Mordaunt and Farmer Willesden had a long confabulation over this letter; and old Lady Ascot says that they had three pints of small ale and a vast number of pipes over it. If there is one quality more than another which adorns her ladyship, it is that of inexorable truth. I had the honour of asking her, at a grand party one night, whether she was quite sure that they only had three pints and not four. She replied that it was only three, and, as she drew the beer herself, she ought to do, and so I disputed the fact no longer.

“Well, Parson,” said Farmer Willesden, “so my daughter is married to a gentleman! Who’d have thought it?”

"To a beggar, you mean, I think," said Mr. Mordaunt.

"There ain't nought of a beggar about *he*," said Farmer Willesden, laughing. "How sly they was about it, pretty dears! Don't you love 'em, parson?"

"I don't quite understand about it, farmer," said Mr. Mordaunt. "I did not miss Mary, at all. Why was she at Barnstaple?"

"Oh! why, she wanted to go there to be finished; and so I sent her."

"To be finished!"

"Ah, at the boarding-school. And she stayed there long enough to make her marriage in Barum legal; and so they was asked there, and they was married there. Don't e'e see?"

"They have both deceived us sadly, farmer."

"What would you have 'em do?" cried the farmer. "When you made love to your poor lady that's gone, did you go and tell your mother?"

"I certainly did not," said Mr. Mordaunt.

"Then you deceived *her* sadly," said the farmer. "They all do it. If young folks mean to come together they'll do it, and small blame to them. However, your son has behaved like an honourable

and good young man to my daughter, which is more to the purpose."

"In marrying her, leaving her on our hands, and running away to Canada!" said Mr. Mordaunt, aghast.

"Be sure," said the farmer. "He had not got money enough to keep her, and so he cut away to Canada to get some. Lord bless you! if ever fortune was writ in a man's face it is writ in Charles's!"

"Do you know, Willesden," said Mr. Mordaunt, "that I think you are as great a fool as I am."

Willesden grinned, but added, more seriously, "My girl must come away from that school. She had better come to her mother."

"No," said Mr. Mordaunt, "she *must* come to me. My boy has made, I think, a fool of himself; and her coming here, and our making all things public, will stop everyone's mouth. Don't you see?"

"It won't do you any good with the Rector and the Archdeacon," said the farmer, rather ruefully.

"Never mind me. I am in trouble so hard with them that nothing can make it worse. Send her here to-morrow night." And so the farmer departed.

"DEAR BISHOP—

"My son has married one of my farmer's daughters, and has gone to Canada to make a home for her. The boy is as innocent and as pure as you are. Please give every one the rights of the story.

"JAMES MORDAUNT."

"DEAR MORDAUNT—

"I will do as you desire, but take the young lady into your own house at once; that act will do more than all my words. Barnstaple is to be with you to-morrow. I cannot in any way make him out. What it is I cannot conceive. He is an awful prig, and silently dangerous. You must think of this: he may mean you well or ill; if he means you well he can do absolutely nothing for you, beyond bringing his influence to bear on that (here came an erasure). Easy to keep you in your place: if he mean you well he can still do nothing; he will not have a living dropping in these ten years, and he is in opposition, and so he cannot get you a Chancellor's living. The worst men I ever have to deal with are Cambridge Conservatives and Oxford Radicals. As a Cambridge man myself I

naturally think an Oxford Radical the worst: he is one; mind him.

“GEORGE CREDITON.”

Poor frightened Mary Mordaunt, *née* Willesden, arrived at the home of her husband's father in a great state of trepidation and terror. But in a quarter of an hour she found that she was the most precious thing there. Poverty may be brutalising to the extremely poor and unrefined; but one of the lessons we can learn from the French every day, if we choose to know them, is this,—that poverty among refined people has a most ennobling influence. Take that little knot of highly-educated paupers in Judea, eighteen hundred years ago, as an example. Mary, the pretty, innocent bride, found herself queen of the establishment. She was to sleep with Alice, and as they went upstairs together, Mr. Mordaunt said,—

“He has gone to prepare a place for you, darling. Trust him, and we shall all be together again soon in a happier land than this. See, pretty; I have twelve hundred pounds, which would be a fortune to him, and which I will freely give if he can establish himself.

Why, we are wealthy people, my love. Now, leave crying ; we shall be rich there."

"I only cry, sir, because I am so happy," said Mary ;
"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

However, none of these sentimentalities could put off the inexorable arrival of Lord Barnstaple, now delayed for two days, his lordship having had to make a speech at the county agricultural meeting, which was given in the 'Times' at full length, and which most carefully expressed nothing at all about the movements of the Opposition. Lord Barnstaple rode up to Mr. Mordaunt's door at half-past twelve, and, finding no groom, led his horse round to the stable, took off his bridle and put a halter on him, took off the saddle, and then came out to the pump with a bucket to get him a pail of water.

At this point Mr. Mordaunt caught him. "My lord," he said, "I did not see you arrive. I am ashamed——"

"At what?" said Lord Barnstaple. "At a man attending to his horse? 'The merciful man is merciful to his beast,' parson."

"No, but I am ashamed that you should have had

to see to your horse, when I would have done it," said Mr. Mordaunt.

"The Church of England has got low enough without the spectacle of an ordained minister grooming a nobleman's horse."

"You will have your own way, my lord."

"I intend to," said Lord Barnstaple, and then Mr. Mordaunt looked at him. Prig he might be, according to our good Bishop's views, but a man he certainly was. A very noble-looking young man, with a singularly set jaw, and a curious reticence of expression which puzzled Mr. Mordaunt extremely.

He brought Lord Barnstaple into the parlour, where there was some simple refreshment; there was no one there but poor Mary, who was curtseying. Mr. Mordaunt asked where Alice was, and she replied that Alice was gone away. She seemed in great trepidation at the sight of the great lord, and Mr. Mordaunt did really wish that Alice had been there to receive him. He presented Mary.

"My daughter, my lord."

"I was not aware that you had two daughters, Mr. Mordaunt."

"I ought to have said my daughter-in-law," said Mr. Mordaunt. "My dear son has made a romantic match, and has gone to Canada to make a home for his bride, leaving his pretty rosebud of a bride here with us."

"Quite so," said Lord Barnstaple. "It must have required singular resolution to leave such a beautiful bride."

"Ah! but he wanted to stay with her for many years, my lord, until his death, not for a poor foolish few, and then leave her in poverty. When you think of it, my lord, he had acted like a man and a gentleman."

There was a brilliance in Lord Barnstaple's eyes when Mr. Mordaunt said this, which attracted that gentleman strangely. Lord Barnstaple only said,—

"That is a very beautiful story. And you, my dear madam, are contented to wait."

"I think that he will send for me soon," she said, quietly, "for I know that he will as soon as he can. I was down to the sea the other day, and the sailors' wives told me that their husbands were away three



years together sometimes. But there are no more loving wives than sailors' wives. I can wait."

The man whom the Bishop had called a prig, looked steadily at her, and Mr. Mordaunt saw a tear trickle down his face. Lord Barnstaple was himself in one moment, however.

"May I ask this young lady to retire while we talk business," he said. "We have secrets to talk of, which must be trusted to no ears but our own." Mary hurriedly retired, and Lord Barnstaple with a bow opened the door for her, and shut it after her.

"Now, Mr. Mordaunt, as we are alone together, I will tell you what is the matter with you. You are horridly poor."

"Yes, my lord."

"And you are bullied out of your life by a rascal and a prig. The rascal is Easy, and the prig the Archdeacon."

"I will not say a word against either of them," said Mr. Mordaunt.

"No, but I know it. It is in our favour that the Archdeacon is not only a prig, but a flunkey: it is in

our favour that the fellow Easy is not only a rogue, but a flunkey : by one bold stroke I can mend matters for you. I have not got a living to give you, and I can't get one for you at present ; but I have no domestic chaplain. My father's domestic chaplain and I never agreed ; he has a good living, and his chaplaincy lapsed with my father's death. I wish to appoint you my domestic chaplain, at the same salary, 250*l.* a year. At the same time there is no librarian at Crowshoe, and the books are in a devil of a state ; you must really undertake them at a salary of 150*l.* a year. I can't give more, and if you think that insufficient I'll tell you what we will do to end the thing in a friendly manner, and without a squabble. Let us both write to Piazzi at the British Museum, and see if he considers it enough. If he decides against me, of course I must pay extra."

"My lord, God is very good to me."

"He is good to all who seek Him," said Lord Barnstaple, sententiously. "But don't you see, my dear soul, that the keys of Crowshoe are in your hands, and that by this manœuvre we have entirely bowled out the adversary ? I'd have given you a living fifty times

over if I had one, but I want to keep you here, and I don't see any other way of doing it."

"Why should you be so generous to me, my lord, whom you have never seen, and of whom you know nothing?"

"Know what?" said Lord Barnstaple, sharply.

"Nothing."

"Don't I?" said his lordship. "Now I'll go saddle my horse. I suppose your daughter Alice will not appear. Well, it is all equal to me, as the French say. She will have to see me some day. Talk about this matter, of your being appointed domestic chaplain and librarian, it will save you trouble. Tell the Bishop about it, he is a capital gossip, and tell him that if I am a prig, I am not the only one in the world."

And so he saddled the horse and rode away, leaving Mr. Mordaunt dazed, but almost directly afterwards he rode back again, jumped off his horse, and laid his hand on Mr. Mordaunt's shoulder. "I forgot one thing," he said. "You are not ashamed of being poor. I brought fifty pounds in notes for you in advance of your salary. Here it is,—God bless you, good-bye," and so he was off at last.

So Mr. Mordaunt stood there a rich man—rich beyond his utmost expectations ; and all by the sudden act of a young nobleman, who was a prig. He had no hesitation in accepting the whole matter any more than he would have rebelled to God about a thunderstorm which had knocked his chimneys about his ears. One ecclesiastical instinct was always in his mind, and he acted on it. He wrote to his Bishop : the Archdeacon said once, “ that if his cat had died he would have walked over and told the Bishop.”

His mind being eased in that way, he went to look for Alice ; but Alice was nowhere to be found. She must be at some of the neighbours’ houses : she had been frightened by Lord Barnstaple, and was keeping out of the way. At ten o’clock he went to bed ; at eleven he was awakened by a candle in his eyes, and the figure of Alice before him, who sat down on the bed.

“ Father, what money have you ? ”

“ A great deal. Fifty pounds.”

“ Has Lord Barnstaple given you money ? ”

“ I am to have four hundred a year from him.”

She sat thinking for a little, and then she said, "I want forty pounds."

"For what?"

"To go to Charles. To go to Canada."

"Why?"

"Do not ask, unless you want me to fall dead at your feet. Save me! that is all I ask. Give me the money."

A wild, dark suspicion formed itself in Mr. Mordaunt's head.

"This is Lord Barnstaple's money," he said, coldly.

"Bless his money, and bless him for what he has done for you! He is a good man. But you must save me, father. I must go to Charles. I am innocent! but I must go to Charles. Oh God!—father, do not hesitate!"

"Can you tell me no more, sweetheart?" said Mr. Mordaunt.

"Not a word!—not a word!" she said. "I will tell you all when I am in Canada—but I cannot now."

"Now look here, Alice, let us be in some way reasonable. You cannot go to Canada to-night, but you can go to bed. Wait till to-morrow, and we will

talk it all over. If you are in trouble, which you will not tell about, what is easier than to do this: to sell out our twelve hundred pounds, and for you, and Mary, and I all to go to Canada together? I can pay Lord Barnstaple back his fifty pounds, and we can all part friends, and join Charles."

Then she began to cry, and then she told the whole truth.

She had been to an aunt's house at Exeter a few months before, and she had been often out walking by herself, as very poor girls have to walk. Wombwell's menagerie was there, and the tiger got out and crawled down towards the river. She saw the thing going along, and pointed it out to a gentleman, who raised the alarm, and made her acquaintance. He was a very nice and handsome gentleman, and begged to be allowed to call on her to see if she had recovered her fright. Her aunt—having inspected the gentleman on his first visit, and having seen that there was no harm in him—had allowed Mr. Mortimer's visits with great complacency, more particularly after she had seen him in eager conversation with Lord Fortescue. The old lady knew that Lord Fortescue would allow no man to

speak to him who was not an honest man; and Lord Fortescue was the only nobleman she knew by sight; and so Mr. Mortimer was allowed to see as much of Alice as he chose; and he made love to Alice, and Alice was very deeply attached to him. But Mr. Mortimer never made any distinct proposal; and so, when Alice came home, she set her mind on forgetting Mr. Mortimer, but found that she could not in any way do so.

When Lord Barnstaple rode into the garden she was looking out of the window, and she saw at once that Mr. Mortimer and Lord Barnstaple were the same man. Lord Barnstaple had deceived her, and he was a false and untruthful man: he had as good as wooed her under a false name, and that she would never forgive. Yet she loved him, admired him, and, after all, respected him. All this she poured into her father's ear as she lay on the bed beside him.

"Yet you would have taken his money to fly from him."

"Yes," she said. "I would have taken it, because I know him to be honest, noble, and good. We could pay it back. Father! he wants to marry me—I have

known that some time, though he never said so. As Mortimer, I would have married him, because, in spite of his deceit, I love him; but as Lord Barnstaple I will not see him again. See if I am not right. Look at Charles's marriage, and ask me if I am to drag down a man whom I really love to that level? And look again, father, after what you have told me to-night, how should we stand if I were to marry him? You have taken money from him. Would not all your friends—even the Bishop—say that you had sold me? How would your name stand *then*? Your name is all that you have had these many years—would you lose *that*?"

"We had better fly," said Mr. Mordaunt. "What loose cash have we?"

"Eight pounds."

"Nothing owing?"

"Nothing."

"Then, if you will get off the bed, I will get up: we will send this fifty pounds civilly to Lord Barnstaple. We will go to London, sell out the twelve hundred pounds, and we will all go to Canada together. If he wants you he can come there after you."

So it happened the next morning when the pretty pride, Mary, was lying in her bed, Alice came to her and woke her, saying, "You must get up and go down to your father and mother to say good-bye."

"Why?" said simple Mary.

"Because we are going to Canada, to Charles," said Alice; and as Mary put her arm round Alice's neck, they felt they were sisters.

Free at last. No more trouble with the Archdeacon, Mr. Easy, the farmers, nay even with the Bishop, his dear friend. A new life was before him and he knew it. Haste and speed were necessary, and there must be but few farewells; all the people must learn their loss after he was gone.

It was early in the bright morning when he set out to see the Bishop; hours before Mr. Easy would leave his bed. The hinds were going to their labour, and one after another greeted him as he walked swiftly along. One very old man stopped him and asked him to sit on a heap of stones at the roadside, which Mr. Mordaunt immediately did.

"Parson," said the old man, "I want you to tell me something. I want you to tell me about the New

Jerusalem, on which you preached last Sunday. Is it in this world or in the next?"

"In both," said Mr. Mordaunt, at once; "for me it is in this world, for you in the next. I am going to it, I believe, before dissolution; you must wait until you are dead. See, George," continued Mr. Mordaunt, "I am going to be very rich just now, and you shall never go into the house."

The old man nodded, but said nothing: a humbug would have loaded Mr. Mordaunt with blessings, old George only nodded, yet I do not think that Mr. Mordaunt was any the worse for the silent blessings which followed him along the lonely road.

He burst in upon the Bishop, pushing past the footman before his name could be announced. "I am off, old fellow," was the salutation which the serious young footman heard before he shut the door.

"Yes," said the Bishop, "and whither?"

"Canada—Ontario, after my boy."

"Then the visit of Lord Barnstaple was not satisfactory?" said the Bishop.

"In a pecuniary way, yes; in other ways, no. Ask *him*, he will tell you the truth. I don't see my way to

certain arrangements, and so I shall go to Canada, and take my boy's bride with me."

"And your daughter?"

"She goes also."

"I don't quite understand," said the Bishop, "but you know best. Everything you do must be for the best. About the parish, are you going to leave it in Easy's hands?"

"Yes: it must be so. Even Paul sowed the seed, and left it to grow among the churches. Yes."

"When do you go?" asked the Bishop.

"Now, instantly. Give me your blessing and send me," and he knelt down at once.

"Let us pray for a little more light, Mordaunt," said the Bishop, and they did so, but none came; then Mr. Mordaunt knelt and received the benediction, and passing swiftly through the Bishop's domestics, was through the town, and was making the dust fly on the king's highway before the Bishop had made up his mind whether he should detain him or not.

Mr. Mordaunt met the Archdeacon on his cob, and he stopped him. "Mr. Archdeacon," he said, "we have not been friends, and yet I have a favour to ask you."

The Archdeacon, who *was* a gentleman, at once dismounted. "Dear Mordaunt," he said, "was it all my fault?"

"No! no! All mine," said Mr. Mordaunt. "I am away to Canada, and shall never see you again. But use your influence with the farmers in my old parish, and see to my poor when I am away."

And so he was gone, and the Archdeacon was left standing in the road beside his cob, in sight of his wondering groom, as Mr. Mordaunt sped away amid the dust. And the Archdeacon saw there and then that they had lost the best man in the whole diocese, and like an honest fellow as he was took the lesson to heart, and acted on it. There is no stouter champion of the agricultural poor in the land now than our Archdeacon.

Mr. Mordaunt met Mr. and Mrs. Easy in a pony carriage, and he stopped them. "I am going away," he said; "going away for ever. Let us part friends, and see to my people when I am gone."

Mrs. Easy (who always drove) whipped the pony, and went on; and so Mordaunt went on to his own, and they drove to *their* place. At this Christmas time let us say, "God forgive us all."

Christmas time in the western part of Ontario is a very pleasant time indeed. The snow is set hard, and you can drive the most beautiful horses in sleighs from one house to another all the night through. Even in that paradise, however, there are drawbacks. You get no newspapers for a long time together in winter, while you get more wolves than you want.

In the extreme West, almost on the Old Buffalo tracks, was a Christmas party—Mr. Mordaunt, his son Charles, his son's wife, Mary, a baby of one year old, Alice Mordaunt, and some servants, Irish all, who were in a state of wonder and delight at the astounding wealth all around them. There was simply more than you could eat if you put your mind to it. Mr. Mordaunt had been away in the sleigh, late in the day, preaching, and had just come home.

Denis was bedding up the horses, and Biddy was waiting for the word to put on the dinner. Some one was wanting; it was Father Moriarty.

"Divvle a sowl of the blessed cratur will be here this night," said Biddy. "And by the name of the ever-blessed Saint Patrick, hark to the wolves. The Mother of God shield the holy man!"

"He'll come," said Mr. Mordaunt. "I left him close by; don't be a fool, Biddy."

"Sorra a one of me would be a fool, and me living in a heretic's house," replied Biddy; "but I'd like to be shrived this blessed night, to pray the better in the morning for him that needs all our prayers."

"What?" said Mr. Mordaunt.

"Just nothing," said Biddy; "hark to the wolves then. Whisht, all of you, there's one blowing under the door now; give me the broom, Miss Mordaunt," and Biddy with infinite nimbleness and dexterity dashed to the door, and as nearly as possible hit the wolf over the head.

"Bad cess to the divvle," she said; "I nearly had him. And the blessed father out among them;" but before she had time to blow off the steam, the "blessed father" opened the door again and walked in, saying—
"Peace upon this house and all in it; Mordaunt, this is the most splendid thing of modern times."

"What is the most splendid thing in modern times, you Irish lunatic?" said Mr. Mordaunt.

"It is an English lunatic this time, my boy, and more power to his elbow. The devil helps heretics.

Here is one of your young English lords, with his doctor, has started from the Pacific side and won his way across the Rocky Mountains. Only him and his doctor, and an Indian. We shall make something of you English yet, if you attend to us."

"It is impossible," said Charles Mordaunt. "I cannot believe it. No man could have done it."

"It's true, nevertheless," said the good Father, rather seriously. "Some said he was a prig, and perhaps he is; some said he was a fool, and maybe he might. But to disprove their words he set a task before him such as no man ever undertook. He did not care for life, for they say that a young lady had cast away his love: of that I know nothing. He has won, however, and has done a thing which will never be forgotten."

"Is he safe, Father?" cried Alice.

"Oh! yes, he is safe enough—and the doctor, a broth of a boy of divilment—and the Indian, the grinning, brown-faced nagur. They are all safe enough."

"Where are they?" cried Alice.

"They were at the door just now, in the cold,

among the wolves," said Father Moriarty. "But maybe, if they are kept there much longer, they will go on to another farm."

Alice threw the door open, and fell fairly into Lord Barnstaple's arms. Father Moriarty kissed every one all round, beginning with Mr. Mordaunt and ending with the baby and the Indian. I have little more to tell; I fancy that the story has told itself by this time. But, as a personal matter, I should very much have liked the Archdeacon and Mr. Letmedown Easy to have seen that Christmas party; it would have done the Archdeacon good. Mr. Easy is a hopeless person.

They kept it up, I beg of you: the Indian, under the laws of the state, was not allowed liquor, but the others (with the exception of the baby) had a moderate quantity of hot wine and water; and I believe that the deleterious herb, tobacco, was used to some extent. Lord Barnstaple and Alice sat side by side, and Lord Barnstaple sang a song (he could no more sing than your grandmother, but did his duty). Father Moriarty sang the "Last Rose of Summer" very beautifully and well; and then, who should sing but Mr. Mordaunt: he sang "The Graves of a House-

hold," and very well, too. In short, in the whole of our good Queen's dominions there was not a pleasanter Christmas party than there was in that farm-house in Western Ontario that Christmas night: though the cold was an illimitable number of degrees below zero, and the wolves came and blew under the door as soon as Father Moriarty began singing.

Lord Barnstaple was married at Montreal by his father-in-law, Mr. Mordaunt; he returned to England and holds his present position, about which we need say nothing. Mr. Mordaunt never returned; he says that, with all its faults, Ontario is dearer to him than any land in the world. He lives with his son Charles, who, if he had been here, might have been a third-rate clerk. I asked an old friend the other day what Mr. Mordaunt was like now. He said, "A man swift and eager in doing good."

Father Moriarty is in great trouble about the infallibility pronunciation. He will have nothing to do with it at all. But I think that Father Moriarty is a man who can take very good care of himself in a free country. He knows as well as we do that the first real freedom dates from Christianity, and that whatever

Churches may have done with our Charter since then, our Charter remains indefeasible. Christianity means freedom; and so we may wish both Father Moriarty and Mr. Mordaunt many happy Christmases, even though the snow is piled high over the roof-tree, and the wolves are smelling and blowing round the door.

MALMAISON.

PART I.

THAT part of Lorraine which lies nearest to Prussia and to Luxemburg is very little known to ordinary travellers. In good years, when the Moselle is full, idle tourists go up the river as far as Alf, get out of the steamer there and then, and go on by the quiet little baths of Bertrich, across the Eifel by Bittburg, and so on to Treves. Few, however, go higher than Treves. The river, although very beautiful, is more monotonous than the Rhine, and travellers are easily tired before they get past Treves. Beyond this glorious old city, with its Roman ruins, however, the Moselle has some grand reaches; and having passed Treves, you get to Remeck, a most beautiful place, and beyond Remeck you come to Sierck. At Sierck the Stomberg rises 1200 feet out of the river, part of the mountain being in Luxemburg or Dutch territory, and part of it

in France. From this really noble hill you look into glorious Lorraine, and see the river winding away like a silver ribbon towards Thionville, which is in sight, and so on to Metz, with her *στεφάνωμα πυργάτων*.

I have only to shut my eyes now, in this quiet London street, to see the wide plains stretching far away before me, bounded by forest, brilliant near the river-side with vineyards, and overarched everywhere by a cloudless sun. I can see the spires of the village churches, some far out upon the plain among the corn-fields, some nestling among the bosage of the forest, some just peeping from among the trees in a hollow by a trout-stream—nay, I can go farther than that in my imagination, for I can hear three old familiar voices calling to me, and saying, “Confess, now, that there is no place in the whole world like our Lorraine.” I find myself answering, “No, and your Lorraine shall be as fair as ever again, my loved ones.” And so I open my eyes again, and look on the dull London street, and the old voices are dumb for a time.

I go back to Lorraine with more recent recollections. Once more I am in the old land.

“Is the green land stained brown with flame?”

They will not let me go over that ridge, and look at Bazaine lying under Metz. Not a human being on this autumn afternoon is allowed to look at him. I say that I am a swift runner, and will be back in three-quarters of an hour. The Bavarian officer says no, and the guns begin to mutter again. All around in the steaming heat the German swarm are under arms, for he is coming out once more. You may see everything and hear everything ; but you must not look on doomed Bazaine. He must not know that we are here. I hold my open letter in my hand, yet I am laughed at. Mademoiselle must do without her news this time, and if Louis dies, *tant pis pour lui*.

So I sit on a broken wall, and look at Lorraine until the ambulance is ready. And wonderfully beautiful it is, even now. South is Metz, with the great cathedral, like a ship at sea, sailing amidst the grim smoke. To the right is Champagne, a dim pearl-grey cloud ; to the left the Vosges and the hills of the Moselle. Around is a hideous and horrible ruin, such as the human mind cannot understand until it has seen it with the eye of the flesh. That heap of shattered stone behind me was once a farm-house, and in the lower part of the

for the young man, Sophie's son, was actually standing by us, with my letter on him, and in all human probability enough treasonable matter on him to hang us altogether. The old lady saved us all by taking the bull by the horns, and roundly abusing the staff-officer, who behaved like a thorough gentleman. Her cow, she said, had been taken by the German Landwehr, who chose to call themselves soldiers. The staff-officer said that he was very sorry, but that the requisition had been made formally through the maire. It was the maire who had taken her cow, not he. She replied that the maire was a gentleman, and not a Prussian, and would never have taken an old woman's cow. The staff-officer asked if she could point out the man who had taken her cow without the authority of the maire. The old woman said that she could not, at her time of life, single out one thief from 750,000. As our good luck would have it, I burst out laughing here, and the good-natured staff-officer joined, recognising me. He took out a thaler, and asked me to give it to the poor woman; "for," he said, "she would never take it from me, poor old soul."

Indeed he was right; for when he was away over the

hill-side, I gave it to her, and she stamped it into the earth, and spat on it. Afterwards the Lorraine peasantry got to know the Germans better, and to love them more.

That was the saddest evening I had in the whole war. I took away old Sophie, and together, under the gathering gloom of the summer night, we saw the horrible ruins of a beautiful place, Malmaison, which I had known before under very different circumstances.

Until I went to these wars I had never seen death, save in the faces of those dear to me. Now I have seen so many dead faces, that they are confused in my memory, and I cannot say this one lay here, or that one lay there. I remember when I was a boy crying over a house which had been burnt down ; but I had not known the house. Now, in a certain way, I knew Malmaison well, for Marie and her cousins had described it to me a hundred times. I had, in fact, seen it once ; and as a lad I used to think of it as an earthly paradise. We four fools went in the omnibus to Hampton Court once, when we were all children, and it was my treat. They thought highly of Hampton Court, but they said one

and all, "Mais Malmaison !" To tell the truth, I believed in Malmaison just as much as I did in my boyhood, when I got the last view of it, under the guidance of old Sophie. Then I saw that I and my dear French friends, who had left France so long ago, had rather miscalculated height and space. Malmaison must have been very beautiful ; but had only been a grand farm château after all.


I have an extreme objection to the melting mood ; I agree with Mark Tapley, that it never did any good to man or woman. But somehow, when I had shown my pass to the German sentry, and old Sophie had taken me round into the flower-garden which I knew so well by report and recollection, as well as by sight—when I saw the Malmaison of my boy's fancy a ghastly heap of hideous ruins, I, like a great fool, sat down on the edge of the dried-up fountain, and began crying like a girl. At that moment Bazaine (to annoy me) burst into a wild hideous roar of artillery and musketry fire two miles off. I would not have cared much for that ; but I was afraid that I heard the heavier guns firing from the forts. In case of a mere sortie, I did not care ; but when the "town guns" began to go sharp and swift in

that month, correspondents had to be in front pretty quickly. And I was to the north, with no road, whereas all the other fellows were to the east.

But Bazaine got quiet, and the old woman and I buried our man. The Prussian lieutenant (a Pomeranian) said that she was a witch, and objected; but the old Frenchwoman and I got it through. She frightened him a little by saying that she could find amber in the forest, if she chose. *She* says that our lad was buried in consecrated ground. I extremely doubt it. Malmaison is so utterly shattered, that you cannot judge by an inch or two. She knew where he lay—it was in the corner of the orchard by the pond. *I* knew the place more by observation. The Pomeranian lieutenant gave us hands, and we got a good grave dug in the orchard. I had seen by that time a good deal of trench-work, and so I happened to do the last honours of death for Alphonse, whom I remember as a mere child with a drum. I recollect boxing his ears for playing his drum on the day of the late Duke of Wellington's funeral, and I am sorry for it now. I did what none of his family could do for him—I buried him with military honours. Perhaps the stay-at-home

people would care to know what military honours are like. You take your man by his two heels as if he was a wheelbarrow, and you drag him to the edge of the trench. Then you get down yourself, and pull him in, laying him as decently as you can. Then you get out, and he stays there. Then you pitch the earth down on his face as if he was a dog.

That night above Metz I spent with old Sophie, and I got all the truth from her. I do not assert that I did my duty by my employers—in fact, I know that I did not. My employers were very strongly German, and I in reason was strongly German also ; but I had lived so very much in France, that I was sympathetically and sentimentally most decidedly French. I can stand unutterable horrors as well as another ; I have proved it. I have looked into more dead men's faces than I could count ; I have been in more hospitals than I can well remember. At Sedan I waited at the corner of the street while 12,000 French prisoners passed, yet I was always in terror that I should see the face of Alphonse Courrier. In all the hideous butchery I never saw it at all. The English doctor who got me to go with him and examine the dead at La Chapelle thought my



nerve was at fault at first. He said kindly, "You will get used to this." I said, "If I could see one face, I would care for nothing." I did not know that the man we buried at Malmaison was the man whose face I dreaded to meet at Givonne. I wish I *had* known; I thought that it was a son or relation of Sophie's. In truth, the man we buried in the orchard was our own Alphonse. It is too horrible to think of now.

They look so pretty, those French dead! Long lines of scarlet and blue—you cannot tell how beautiful they look until you have seen them. I have tried hard, but I never dreamt that I should see death in this degree. And to think of my burying Alphonse, and the old witch Sophie keeping her secret! The heaped blue Germans beyond Bazeilles were very terrible, the trenches there are terrible; but at the last, in the mere beauty of death, France is supreme. No human mind ever conceived anything more terribly beautiful than the French dead on these fields.

I would not have cared much, had it not been for Alphonse. I always liked the boy, and I knew that he loved Marie, as boys will love. I had loved her myself, in fact; and when the dead lad had been dragged to

his grave in the orchard by the heels, and when old Sophie told me that the unrecognisable corpse was that of Alphonse, I took her away with me ; and in a half-ruined room of the old château she and I talked through the whole story together. The room was the headquarters of General von Stein, who sat by the window ; while I, with old Sophie under my protection, cowered over the fire, surrounded by French peasants who had crept in for warmth.* The room properly belonged to the Pomeranians, but they gave us the best places. Young Franz Hertz (of Pomerania), who was a friend of mine, and who had been educated at King's College with me, asked me why I had got the old Frenchwoman in tow. I told him very quickly who she was ; and he went away at once, and came back with sausage and wine for her. At this moment Bazaine began, or, to be more correct, some of his outposts began, a spluttering fire of musketry, and a few large guns were fired. It might be a sortie, or it might not ; but the German officers hurried out, and left old Sophie and me alone to talk through the story.

* The writer is only describing what he has seen.

The Courriers have always been rich, and the Canzons are richer than they. The Canzons are of an old family—a family who, however, kept a great deal of their property in Champagne through the Revolution. The Courriers made their money while the Canzons kept it. But an alliance was made between the two families in 1828, when the gentle and pretty Alice de Canzon married Adolphe Courier. At the same time Elise Courier married young Hubert de Canzon. Some said that they were mere *mariages de convenances*, but it was not the fact. Old Courier (into whose share of the Revolution of 1792 I decline to inquire) was a kind of tenant of old De Canzon in the Champagne wine trade. The children had grown up together, and so no one was in the least surprised at their making mutual marriages. But there was something more tender between the families than mere mercantile matters. The old men had a very strong feeling towards one another. The Courriers and the Canzons had helped one another through very hard times with all loyalty and good-will. That traditional loyalty descended to other generations. Elise Courier-Canzon died ten years after she had given birth to Marie Can-

zon, and old Canzon dying a few years afterwards, left Marie Canzon his heiress.


The families were Huguenot, and it so happened that both old Courier (still alive at eighty) and De Canzon desired that their grandchildren should have a certain amount of English education.

It therefore came about that Marie De Canzon was in England with her two cousins. Marie used to go to school at Mrs. Protheroe's, in Earl's-gardens, Brompton ; and the two cousins, Louis and Alphonse, were boarded with my father, a clergyman at Holloway, for the purpose of attending King's College. My father was glad to have two French boys in his house ; and he used to make us speak French at dinner. My father was also of the Evangelical school, and was rather proud of having Huguenots in the house. If my father ever could have bored me, it would have been on the subject of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

I wanted to be a soldier ; but my father could not afford it, and wanted me to be a clergyman. To this I objected ; and the end of it all is that I am a journalist. When war ceases, I shall have to find a new employment. However, it has not ceased as yet. While there

is life there is hope. I will undertake to go under fire for any paper—political principles no object—for fifty pounds a month, and twenty francs a day for expenses, excluding telegrams, which are always incorrect. I suppose that I shall end by going to a farm in Ontario, just to win bread between the wars, for I never can settle down permanently any more. I have the war-fever on me ever since the Crimean campaign, when I, as a mere boy, won the applause of Europe by my letters. I have been through every campaign since that; and I wake in the night, here in quiet England, and fancy that I hear the sound of guns. I have been wounded twice: once on the day of Balaclava, and once on the day of Agra. I suppose I shall have peace in my grave, for there seems no peace here.


There was a time in my life when things were not so with me. The morning of my life at college was very peaceful. Louis and Alphonse Courrier used to go to the college together, though I was much older than either of them, and in the senior department. Louis, again, was much older than Alphonse, who was about the same age as his cousin Marie. I took to these gentle French lads, as some English boys will take to



French boys in preference to any boys of their own nation. They were so gentle and pleasant, that it was impossible to help loving at least one of them, and besides, they were the only two pupils my father had at the time, so we were always together. They knew no ill, and were content with the simplest pleasures—an excursion to Hampstead-heath, or, still better, a ramble among the shops, were pleasures enough for us. I have been very fine since then, and have dined with princes and rajahs; but I never was so happy as I was in the very old days before this journalist business began.

One Christmas my mother announced to us that we were to have a visitor, but she refused to tell us the name. On Christmas-eve a fly drove up to the door, and there stepped from it Marie Canzon, at the sight of whom her cousins gave a wild cry of joy.

She was an exquisite blonde young woman, of about fifteen years old; very tall for her age. I have never seen any one so beautiful in my life. She is handsome still, in spite of all she has gone through. Ask any of those kindly romantic Germans who were first into Metz, whether they remember the beautiful French-woman who watched by two corpses under the cathe-



dral ; ask Bazaine if he remembers the lady who headed the women of Metz, when they came and prayed him not to surrender to the very last ; ask the Germans if they remember the lady who carried the white flag in that most lamentable sortie of women.

I remember that there was deep frost and ice when she came ; and that the waters were bearing, and all the world was on the ice. It was early in the day when she came, and we were going to skate on our pet piece of water, St. James's-park. She asked to go with us, and my mother gave leave ; and so we took her tripping among us.

Her whole soul seemed filled with delight, but delight of a very quiet kind. She thought that we boys were doing her the very highest honour in the world. She was humbly grateful to us ; and she once said to me—

“ You are too kind altogether, monsieur, to burden yourself with me ; but I will be very good, and do exactly as I am told. I have never seen ice, save once on the Moselle at Thionville. Monsieur knows Thionville ? No ! Well, I can assure monsieur that Thionville is a

very nice place, though not so nice as Metz ; but of all places in the world, I think Strasburg the finest, in regard to shops. Stay, I am incorrect, as usual. I said that I had only seen ice once ; yet I have seen it twice. I saw some at Namur on the Meuse. Does monsieur know Namur ?”

I did not.

“ Ah-h-h ! but at Namur, in the shop on the other side of the way from the Hôtel de l'Europe, there is the finest gingerbread in all the world. I stayed with my aunt Courier at Lafontaine for a week, and I used to walk into Namur every day to buy that gingerbread. It was a spécialité of Monsieur Leroy's. I like Sedan also ; but Bazeilles is very pleasant—you are more in the country. There are very pleasant places round Sedan, where all the world goes and has milk and strawberries—for example, Fond de Givonne, and beyond again, up the little valley to Givonne. Monsieur must travel and see these places.”

Monsieur travelled and saw them years after. Sedan was a horrible pest-house ; Bazeilles a ruin and a horror such as the world had never seen before ; Fond de Givonne ruined with shells ; and the height between

Givonne and Fond de Givonne covered with French corpses in heaps.

So we took her on to the ice, while we skated round her. I can see her now, sitting on a chair, which I hired for her, her eyes bright with pleasure, thinking herself as fine as a queen, but perfectly humble and grateful. After a time she asked us to skate away, for she was perfectly safe; and we did so. When we came back after half an hour, we found her in animated conversation with the man who let out the chairs and skates. We told her that it was time to go home, and she came at once; but when I offered the man the money for the chair, he emphatically refused to take it, to my great astonishment. He looked like a common "ice blackguard;" but he would have none of my money—"he would not take money for miss."

When we were tripping home she took my arm—she was nearly as tall as myself, though I am not small—and asked me if I would do her a favour. I tell the honest truth when I say that I was so madly in love with her, that I would have done anything.

"I cannot tell you how it was;
But this I know, it came to pass,"

as Christina Rossetti sings. I promised her that I would do everything she told me for ever.

"But that is unreasonable," she said ; "but the English are bizarre. I ask you to do one thing for me, and you promise to do all things. I do not understand."

"Chivalry," I said.

"Oh, *comme cela*," she said, laughing. "Well, now then, good knight, you must take me to see the wife of that man who hired to us the chair. He is in distress, and I have money, and I want to give him some. You hear, you knight?"

I heard, and I obeyed. She had got the address neatly written down in her pocket-book, and we went the next day. As we started together, she said to me—

"You are so very kind to me, that I do not know how to thank you. For you to take me to the ice yesterday, and again to take me to these poor people! I will try to give no trouble to you; but you spoil me with your kindness. Will you do more for me?"

I do not remember exactly what I said, but I did not make a fool of myself.

"Then," she said, "I want to slide on the ice, as I

saw those people doing, and I want you to show me a shop where they sell chocolate."

I went with her then to Fortnum and Mason's; after which we crossed the ice together, and went down the Horseferry-road into a slum, where she found the woman she wanted in bed with a baby; and four children cowering about the floor before an empty fireplace. She looked round the room with a rather experienced eye, as it struck me, and without saying more than "Good-morning" to the woman, took out a sovereign, and requested me to step out and order in half a ton of coals and some small wood to be sent round instantly. I went at once in admiration, and she followed, only, however, to turn into a butcher's, which she had observed in passing. "I am quite safe," she said; and when I came back after ordering the coals, I found her in the woman's room chattering, and preparing beef-tea in the only saucepan which had not been pawned.

"Have you no sisters of charity here in England?" she said.

I said no, with the exception of the Roman-catholic sisters.

"*Tant pis*," she said. "We French Protestants have, though. We are before you English Protestants in that. You English should have sisters of charity. My old nurse was one only last year, and I worked with her; so I know, though I am only fifteen. Could you nurse a man with a broken leg?"

I said no.

"Ah, but I could," she said, triumphantly. "I helped to nurse old Pierre, our gardener. I am rich, I; but I would sooner relieve human suffering than marry a minister of state. Now let us go slide. I say, you kind Englishman, you will take me there to that poor woman again to-morrow?"

I promised, and we went and slid. I can see her now, with the thoughtful look on her face as she was preparing, the look of calm pleasure as she was progressing, and the bright flash of triumph when she ended. We were on a very quiet piece of the ice behind the island, where other ladies were sliding, but Marie was as quiet as any of them. A great hulking Irishman, a sergeant in the Coldstream Guards, O'Halloran (he was shot through the heart just in front of Jones of the *Daily News*, trying to get over the vineyard wall at Inker-

man), came over from the barracks, and said that he would cut the slide clean for the ladies. He came down by the run, and Marie laughed so prettily, that O'Halloran said he was quite sure that her ladyship was an Irishwoman.

I don't know what I said that evening as we walked home. Sad nonsense, I doubt; I only know that she was crying when we came to the door, and that when I had gone up to my room she came and kissed me, and told me that it never could be. With her glorious frankness she told me that it might be with Louis, but with no other in this world. I accepted my fate, and am a journalist unto this day. It seems hard: I would have worked for her well, and you shall see that I did work for her. She knows why she made her decision once for all, and left me a little like the Wandering Jew, and very much like a stormy petrel.

I had got the answer which no gentleman takes twice from any woman, and with an aching heart I began to watch many things, young as I was. First, I looked at my own prospects, and saw that they were very bad. My father was very poor, and I perceived that unless I could do something for myself, I should have hard work

to keep the wolf from the door. I thought of journalism, and I saw (young as I was) an opportunity of destroying the fiction that Russia only *resumed* the right of sending ships through the Dardanelles. I was the first who said that she never had it. I wrote a leading article on the subject, and sent it to a newspaper which I knew agreed with me. The article was inserted, and I was requested to call on the editor. I dared not go; I was little more than a schoolboy, almost without down on my face—I should have ruined everything by going. I told my dear father the whole truth, and *he* went to the editor with a high hand. The editor was utterly astonished at seeing my father, a London rector, and was more than utterly astonished at hearing that the article was written by his son. The editor offered money for the article, but my father refused it. He said that in the case of a young man like myself, with such brilliant prospects before him, it was extremely doubtful whether it was not the duty of a father to stand between him and the press. I think that my father got the best of it for the time, in spite of his verbosity; but at the same time I am only a journalist, with prospects of Ontario.

There was a sickening of the heart as I watched the relations between Louis, Marie, and Alphonse. As time went on, the sickening at the heart grew worse and worse ; for while I saw that she never could love me as a wife should love her husband, I saw that she loved Louis, and that Alphonse loved her. Before the end of these Christmas holidays Louis was her avowed lover, and we heard from France that the members of the two families, Courrier and Canzon, had required for family reasons that they should be affianced. Louis was therefore engaged to Marie, while Alphonse was desperately in love with her ; from this moment I say nothing of myself.

I think that Louis loved her—I am sure that he did : that she loved him, I know to my cost. We must say one word for Alphonse, whom Sophie and I buried in the orchard the other day. He was as brave and as true a boy as ever lived. Always in my mind he seemed the superior of Louis ; he seemed to me the model of a French lad ; perhaps a lad who was more inclined to attend to words than to facts ; very much the same kind of lad as is prepared to resume this war. He loved Marie with a wild and devoted love, such as Louis and I never could

give her. I need not say which was his favourite author. He loved Marie and France together, and he would read Thiers at night until my father took the book away from him, for fear he should set the house on fire.

I argued with him on this matter of Francomania. France, I declared, was after all only a congeries of states, most of which had been in historical times held by England. It was of no more use than shying bread pills against the sides of the Monarch. He believed in France, and taunted me with the relations between England, Scotland, and Ireland. There he was unanswerable, and I had to give way to him at once. He had erected a god, and called it France, and who was I that I should gainsay him? Have we not a god called England ourselves? The pretty little fellow loved France as he loved Marie; he died for both of them; what man could do more? It seems to us, in the beginning of a new movement about the rights of women, that women, if they gain much, will lose much. The relations between men and women will be altered, and God only knows whether it will be for better or for worse. Alphonse would have been a simple slave to


Marie, which would have been ill and foolish ; but they might have been happy, if in this bad world any one can be happy. It was, however, evident to me that Alphonse was in love with Marie before the down was on his chin. The boy did not know what was the matter with him, and I naturally was the last person to speak about it, because I was in love with her myself.

I cannot say that I ever thoroughly *loved* Louis. He was a prig, and I dislike prigs ; and again, French prigs are the worst of all prigs, not excepting English and Prussian prigs. I do not say for an instant that I speak without prejudice, because he was my rival in regard to the matter of Marie. You may say that Alphonse was to a certain extent my rival ; but I could at any time have taken Alphonse round the neck and told him the whole truth, whereas I would have died sooner than tell Louis one solitary word. It comes to the same thing in the end. Louis went to Brienne, from which school he at once, with his English education, got his commission, while Alphonse and myself were left alone in England with Marie.

I had given the matter entirely up ; I saw that she

would never be the wife of myself or of any other Englishman ; but I was very much distressed at seeing the effect of her presence on Alphonse. As the lad matured, the love grew. He was aware that Marie was engaged to his brother ; he was quite leal and true ; but I have had that lad, who slept in the same room with me, crying half the night over a matter which he would sooner die than divulge. *I* knew what the matter was ; and I take the opportunity of saying, that the mere matter of crying is no proof of cowardice in a French boy, as it is in the case of an English boy. They are more excitable ; but in the face of an enemy they have always had the character of courage. Alphonse used to cry, and I used to think him a fool for doing it ; we shall see the end of this boy before we have done.

My father had three months' leave from his living from the bishop, and, bethinking him of many economical matters, thought that the cheapest thing to do was to go abroad, brush up his languages, and also take my mother, myself, and Alphonse. Marie stayed at her school. It was a trip well conceived (there never was any one like my father) and well carried out. We went



to Antwerp; from Antwerp to Cologne, from Cologne to Coblentz, and so by steamer up the Moselle to Alf. Now my father was a geologist, and he must needs see the Dolomite. After we had finished trying to break our necks, and drown ourselves in numberless lakes (now marked by the track of Prince Frederick Charles's armies), we headed for Treves, and from Treves on to Wasserbillig and away into Lorraine on foot, three happy boys—for my father was as good a boy at fifty-three as either Alphonse or I. Leaving Wasserbillig, we walked so far and so fast, that we got into Metz as the drums were beating the "couchez." Heavens! it seems as if it had all been a hundred years ago, and in another world.

My father was a singularly resolute man, who had not only read history, but who was determined that every one else should hear it from his mouth. The end of our journey was Malmaison, close to Amandvilliers (the centre of the battle of Gravelotte, according to Bazaine); but my father wished to improve our minds by going round to Thionville and Longwy; and so we tramped with him over the dusty roads, and when we got near Thionville, we hung on his words as he told us the

glorious old story of the horse and the bundle of hay. We slept at Petonville, I remember ; and I remember also that my father took us over Luxemburg frontier to a place called Otange, where the landlord of the inn in which we slept told him that he had killed forty boars with his own hand in the last winter. My father said that he had not come to hear lies, but that he wanted to see the iron gate from the heights. We boys kept close to my father's coat-tails while he brushed through the copsewood, for we expected a boar every instant. I recollect seeing chimneys below me through trees ; and my father turned and said to us, or to the air, "The French are mad ; in case of a violation of neutral territory, this place might be shelled in an hour. I shall go on to La Chapelle, you boys."

We had not the slightest objection to go on to La Chapelle, so long as he took us to Malmaison at last. We walked quickly away with my father, and we got a bed in one of the outskirts of La Chapelle, at a place called Aboue. It was a very pleasant little place, and Madame Duprez (the landlady) was very kind to us boys. My father and she fell to what may be called "polite loggerheads" on the subject of Romanism ; but

when she gave him his chamber candlestick they were the best of friends. My father hoped that she would find her way ultimately to a good place, and she hoped most sincerely that he would not find himself in a very bad place. She had nailed her colours to the mast, and I do not think there was much harm done ; they agreed to squabble over religious matters, and they did it. The next time that I was at Aboue, madame's house was ripped to pieces by shells, and I saw there what I hope I shall never see again—the French dead who had died from their wounds were brought out into the pretty street, and laid with their faces covered by a cloth, ready for the German burial-party.

Then, I remember, we looked about Sedan, and we thought it a very dull place ; and we went across to Bazeilles, and that was intolerably dull. Little did we dream that Sedan was a word to be written on the hearts of this generation. My father did not think highly of Sedan in any way. He did not like the cookery. Perhaps if he had known that his son was to sit there with German officers, eating horseflesh, he would have liked it less.

My father, Alphonse, and myself cut straight across

the country from Sedan to Briey, passing as we went Montmédy, a place which caused my father to lecture about the old Spanish-French fight there. From Montmédy we passed away south ; and my father, who carried a little fishing-rod (from which implement of war he was never separated), caught trout, grayling, and chub, while Alphonse and I rolled in the grass, and read Grant's novels. It was a quiet happy time ; and going over the ground again last year, I could not help making a fool of myself at seeing the pretty dead Frenchmen lying in the old spots unburied, where my father had been catching trout. If this is read by any young man who intends to be a journalist, let him take my advice, and get rid of sentimentality. I can assure that young man, that after he has looked into the first dead face, the process will be by no means difficult. After one or two violent outbreaks, he will become perfectly fit for his work—that is to say, to a certain extent brutalised.

I can still hear my father's British roar in the principal hotel at Briey. I remember the little inn in front of the château, served, even in those old times, by the little niece of old Sophie, and who bore her name.

Young Sophie has grown up now, and has covered herself with a glory which is not of this world. On the horrible day of St. Privat, when the glass was broken in her house and her brother's with the concussion of the cannon, she never lost heart for an instant. She slaved all the morning among the French and German wounded ; and the next day, when the Germans came in, she served them without any pay at all. I have few pleasant recollections in my life, for I have been a wild wandering bird ; but have a pleasure in remembering young Sophie.

Briey, I remember, in the old times before the cataclysm, was a pretty, abrupt town over a little stream, with narrow streets and a nice château in a little square. My father knocked up the curé (as was his habit in all Romanist towns), and had a rather strong argument with him on the subject of religion. On the occasion of our visit to Briey, the argument between Romanism and Protestantism was continued far into the night ; and when my father came to bed with me, he talked himself to sleep on the subject. Meanwhile Alphonse and I had been doing a little matter on our own account. The lady of the château had caught us

in the square, and had taken us into the château itself. Little did I think to what purposes that château was to be applied last year.

When I went in with her into her garden, it was a garden of all delight. She let us turn on the fountains, and she let us eat the strawberries, which grew on terrace after terrace. When I went into it last year it was a hospital. There were five young Frenchmen and one young German in the *salon*; and there was also some one else, of whom we shall hear anon. At the time of my first visit to the château of Briey there was no dream of the horrors of war. I have been there twice; but I never will go any more—never more, for ever. Briey is, as the Scotch say, a place which I have “put past.”

My father's argument with the curé was so exceedingly warm, and so successful on my father's side, that the curé insisted that he should accompany us to the village of Ste. Marie aux Chênes, where lived a curé who would demolish and ruin my father, with fifty-Protestant power at his back. The curé was politely infuriated at my father's arguments, but pleaded inexperience in divinity; so all the way from Aboué to Ste.

Marie my father hurled the fathers of the Church at his head like German cannon-shots. In the horrible shattering roar of last year, I remember smiling at the old ecclesiastical battle. My father had distinctly the best of it until we reached Ste. Marie aux Chênes, and met the curé of that place out walking. Our good young man of Briey handed my father over like a bale of goods to the curé of Ste. Marie, and the curé (now Monseigneur of R——) took him in hand. My impression was, that although my father's arguments were excellent, he got the worst of it. But I am only a journalist, and not worth listening to.

But under the broad black skirts of my father and the curés of Briey and Ste. Marie aux Chênes, I saw, in the midst of the ecclesiastical battle, the village which is the centre of one of the battles for this century at least—the village of St. Privat. Bazaine says, that Amandvilliers, three miles away, was the object of his centre attack, in the battle called Gravelotte. Bazaine should know better than I; but St. Privat is shattered far more than Amandvilliers; and so I fancy that Bazaine's grand plan must have gone a little wrong, as French plans generally seem to have done last year.

Alphonse and I liked St. Privat very much, because the maire had a remarkable kind of early pear in his garden, which, as he proudly remarked, were ripe before the strawberries were gone. I pointed out to the maire, that if I said that we had eaten pears and strawberries together, we should not be believed. The maire laughed, and advised me not to tell the story, adding that I was a boy of genius. Yet I have something stranger to tell than the fact of eating pears and strawberries at one and the same time.

I have come home so weary and so broken-hearted over this matter, that I must be allowed to tell my story in my own way, or I cannot tell it at all. I must, for instance, tell you what St. Privat was like before the day of judgment came, and it was left the hideous heap of ruins which it is now. It was never a pretty village; it lay out on the bald plains of the table-land of Lorraine, looking at the pearl-grey cloud which we boys were told was Champagne, and at the rolling peaks which we were told were the Vosges. It seems very strange to me that those who have taken such an interest in this war have heard of Gravelotte, but do not seem to have heard of St. Privat. The horrible

shattered ruin of St. Privat is worse than anything except Bazeilles. Among the men who guided those God-sent waggons of the International Society you will not find one who does not tell you that St. Privat is the worst thing of all. Readers may think I am writing fiction when I mention St. Privat; would they be so good as to get the Report of these glorious Quakers, who have been risking their lives by disease? I, who write these words, was in St. Privat in the lowest depth of her ruin. We had to ask the German doctor where certain wounded were after whom we had come. "Moved to the rear," he said; "we expect Bazaine out every instant, and there will be a great battle." I looked right and left over the desolated fields, and saw the steel-blue line which hemmed Bazaine in, and I came to certain conclusions which were found to be correct. I remember in these late horrible times likening Bazaine to Sterne's starling, but that is no matter. On the old visit to St. Privat things were very different. My father was now determined to see Metz or die, and the last memory I have of St. Privat is this. My father had so violently squabbled with the curés of Aboue, Ste. Marie aux Chênes, and St.

Privat, that he gave the curé of St. Privat his own private copy of Thomas à Kempis as a keepsake. The curé of St. Privat gave my father pears in his *bon-homie*—he had little to give then, and less now—and my father put them in his pocket, and when the diligence for Metz came in, sat on them, and made jam of them. Pretty old times! I do not like laughing at my father, God bless him; but it is better to make a harmless joke about one's own father than cry over the corpse of Alphonse. Through all this break-heart business my father is dearer to me than any other. Yet we who have seen matters, get so used to them, that we can make a joke about our own fathers. Believe me that I tell you the truth about that. *Ex-perto crede*; war is brutalising, not ennobling. The German officers, commanding the best of all good men, say so, and in the German army there are men who can think while they fight.

My father was bound to go to Metz, or perish in the attempt, because he said that the expanse of that great apse dominated in the most inartistic way the height of the main tower. Whether he thought that he could put the matter right by going there, I am

unable to say: I can only say that we never went there, in consequence of my father having a violent attack of sciatica, which laid him up at Amandvilliers. Some fool of a doctor had told my father that his life was not good: and so, when I and Alphonse got him to his bed at Madame Leroy's at Amadnvilliers, four miles from Metz, my father told me that he was not in any way afraid of death, and that all his affairs were in order. (They were not, but that is no matter.) My father now told me for the first time, that Louis was at Metz, and he begged me to send for him. I of course at once sent Alphonse. He went and fetched Louis, but by that time my father was perfectly well; and instead of having his dying directions, only found a powerfully-built English parson before him, intent on bullying him on any point he would like to air. I am a little bit afraid that my dear father did bully Louis. I never had sciatica myself, but I should conceive it to be nearly as exasperating a disease as toothache. At all events, my father, who was the sweetest-tempered of human beings, was very cross over it; but he brightened up and got pleasant when Louis said that he had got leave from his regiment, and that he insisted on

our all going away to Malmaison together. Malmaison was Louis's property, you will see, and he was to marry Marie in spite of every one. Nevertheless, we had a very pleasant day, though my father would be jocular over Louis's red trousers. These were old, old times.

We got, I remember, one of those queer vehicles now called an *américaine*. Louis and Alphonse sat in front, while my father and I sat under the hood. Louis drove, with his red trousers, on the splashboard, and, as my father remarked once or twice, drove principally into the ditch; but that ditch was not deep enough then to bury dead men, and so we reached Malmaison with nothing worse than my father's objurgations.

At that time the ghastly old harridan who now calls herself Sophie was an uncommonly handsome woman of forty-eight. She was then very brisk and gentle, and she showed us everything, to my father's great approval. The country around was bare, without hedges, and well tilled, and my father said that it reminded him of Waterloo. There was an undoubted resemblance, as we all agreed. Malmaison is singularly like Hugomont, only it is bigger, and stands more alone.

That day among days was a great day for me. Sophie got the peacock to come and eat corn ; and she gave me a feather which he had dropped out of his tail. And there were fowls there of the Crève-cœur sort, which could hardly see to eat for feathers. There was also a delicious kind of swine, like a greyhound, about which I irritated Sophie, because I said they must be wild. Sophie said that they were such good pigs, that they would fatten on anything. I asked her why she did not give them something to fatten on. She rode the high horse with me, and said that I doubtless knew best.

We were to lie at Malmaison, and that was most delightful ; because we should see the place again the next morning. I went to bed very early with Alphonse ; but my father and Louis sat up to drink a bottle of Walportsheimer together. I was very restless (Heaven only knows why—I do not believe in brain-waves), and I was walking up and down the room in my shirt, when my father came in.

“I was going to rouse you up, my boy,” he said.
“Why are you not in bed ?”

And I answered that I could not tell. I could not

sleep. I said that there were ghosts—I was young enough to say that—and my father did not laugh at me, but said, that there were ghosts enough there, without doubt, but that was not the time for seeing them. He then told me to put on my trousers, which I did, and to come downstairs, which I did.

I had to look on the game which the forester had just brought in, and the beauty of the sight was beyond belief. The heaped French dead, which I saw afterwards in the dung-yard before the door, were not more beautiful. The forester had cast down a great wild boar, and on it he had thrown hares, blackcock, hazel-hens, and quail. I was very much delighted with it. My father pointed out to me, that the real beauty of heaped game consisted in the wondrous half-tints and colours. And then I went upstairs, and lay quiet beside Alphonse until the glorious sun awoke us in the morning, and we rose and stood looking together across the vast fields of waving grain which spread round us on all sides. I said to Alphonse, "What a big dog is yonder on the lawn!" and he said, "Dog! it is a boar."

I dressed hurriedly and ran downstairs as fast as I could, and out round the garden to capture that boar.

I very nearly succeeded, for I met the brute in an ally, with a box-hedge on each side, through which he could not pass. With the madness of youth I tried to seize the animal; but after a fierce grunt he turned back and hurried through some flowers. Louis, who ran up, drew his sword as the boar went past him, and cut at him, and says he thinks that he hurt him; but I am now so used to French war despatches, that I am very doubtful.

Louis had come out after me, and had met the boar at the end of an alley through which I had chased him. Louis was at that time seventeen, whereas I was nearly nineteen; but Louis, in consequence of his red trousers, was a great deal more than a hundred years older than I was. I yielded entirely to Louis's knowledge of the world, and gave way to him on all points. Louis had had four months in a French regiment, and knew everything. My father used to talk too fast; but my father, although a clergyman, knew a great deal, in consequence of having to take pupils to eke out his income.

Louis said to me,—

“Come to breakfast, and leave the hunting of boars. There has arrived a German, a cousin of Marie's, from Saxony. Come quickly, or he will eat all.”

I ran up to our bedroom and made myself tidy, and I came down and met this brute of a Saxon. My French proclivities were then so strong, that I considered this young man as my natural enemy before I saw him. I was most agreeably surprised. The young man to whom I was introduced was one of the handsomest young men I had ever seen. He was very blonde, and, in fact, his mustache was no darker than a tooth-brush, though his whiskers were darker. He took me utterly by surprise with his politeness and his wonderful knowledge. He told me quietly that I was the first educated English youth he had met, and he wished me to explain to him some passages in Mad Tom in *King Lear*. He was puzzled about the "old grey rat and the ditch-dog;" and I explained to him the difference between the old English rat and the water-vole. Then he must have me explain why "Hopdance crieth in Tom's belly for two white herring." I explained to him that white herring was to be distinguished from red herring, and that Tom was supposed to be thirsty. Then I got talking over the subject, and among other things told him that the character of Mad Tom was entirely artificial, although probably the greatest effort of all

Shakspeare's genius. I said that Mad Tom was a gentleman, who was fit to govern the people by knowing their wants, and that he showed his knowledge of their wants in his assumed madness. I warmed with the theme to this young Saxon officer, and told him roundly to his face, that no German poet had ever equalled the line in Mad Tom in which he says,—

“Away to wakes and fairs and market towns.”

I went on eagerly, and abused Shakspeare for the utter improbability of Edgar acting so wondrous well as to identify himself so thoroughly with a lunatic beggar, whose only pleasure was motion and excitement. I went through the character from beginning to end; and when I had finished my say, I saw young Caspar the Saxon and my father looking at me steadily and calmly, while Louis and Alphonse were laughing.

“He should write that down,” said my father. “The boy thinks.”

“He has told me more than I knew before,” said Caspar. “Who knows the route from here to Ste. Marie? Can one get to Aboue any shorter way than by La Tige?”

"I cannot say," said Louis. "You seem to know the country pretty well."

"We study geography, we Germans," said young Caspar. "We may need it."

Louis was furious in a moment.

"You mean the geography of Lorraine," he said.

"I mean geography generally," said Caspar.

After this, Louis strutted and fumed, and I was very glad that we got out of it without a quarrel, more particularly as Caspar told me that he happened to be in love with Marie, and that he was perfectly prepared to put a bullet into any man who ventured to be in love with her besides himself. I replied, on the other hand, that I was violently in love with her myself, and that I was perfectly ready to be shot at his earliest convenience. He saw the outrageous nonsense of his proposition, and laughed. But he asked me whether Marie loved me; and I said no, I did not think so. "Any one else?" I said that we were all such children, that we should not think of such things. I said that I was still such a baby, that I could run after a peacock; and he said, that though his beard was grown early, he was as great a baby as I was.

So we parted ; and my father insisted on having sciatica again and going back to Luxemburg. On arriving at Luxemburg my father sent for the doctor ; and the doctor being out, he sent round for the prime minister. The prime minister being at the Café de l'Union, and being hunted up there by a dexterous and nimble commissionnaire, came at once on being told that an Englishman of eminence was in trouble. I do not know why my father did this ; but I only know that there was the most *awful* row you ever heard in your life. The most unfortunate thing was, that the prime minister could understand English, and so could understand what my father said. I do most sincerely hope that the new Education Boards will put an entire veto on the learning of languages. It is the greatest mistake in the world. All difficulties with America, for example, would sink into nothing if we did not understand one another's language. My father could talk both German and French to a limited extent ; but that night, with the irritation of the sciatica on him, he persisted in talking English, and, as I have said, the prime minister understood him. My father ended by saying, that a

state which would raise no army had no *raison d'être* at all.

The prime minister burst out of the room, and fell over my father's foot-pan. At the same time the Prussian officer of the garrison came into my father's bedroom, and asked to see his passport. My father was thoroughly cross now, and said that his passport was under his pillow, but that he would not show it to any German unhung. This conduct on the part of a British rector naturally led to a terrible scene, in which I, as an undeveloped journalist, took part. My father refused to get out of bed, and so the whole quarrel was carried out on the stairs. Alphonse was of no use ; he got frightened. I stood on the stairs, and called the Prussian officer every name I could lay my tongue to ; but he would not go at all. Then I said in German that I would make him go. Upon this he requested me to come to the bottom of the stairs. I at once did so, and there was a struggle, the landlord holding the light. I got by far the worst of it ; for the Prussian was stronger than I was, and I was marched off to a guard-house, while my father was arrested in his bed.

Alphonse meanwhile had knocked up a bill of six-

teen francs in bribery and treating. The lad said that he paid for a bottle of wine for the prime minister ; but I doubt that, because the prime minister was a gentleman, and the boy could not be trusted to tell the truth. My father and I were liberated, and so ended our first expedition through Luxemburg and Lorraine.

It is as well to state the whole truth, even in a story like this. Luxemburg must be very careful, if she desires to preserve her neutrality now. The Germans have been very long-suffering with her, and she must take care. The neutrality of Luxemburg has cost the Germans 20,000 lives ; and when men get mad, as they are getting now, a small state like Luxemburg must look out lest she commit a violation of neutrality.*

* On the great day of Sedan, when we were pushing forward to the fight, the Brandenburg Hussars, the regiment of the ever-memorable Ziethen, were sitting with their horses' fore-hoofs on the frontier of Luxemburg. The writer happened to be with them ; and sooner than the line should be violated, they backed their horses, *lest the hind feet of their horses should go over the frontier line*. To this I can swear. One violation of neutral territory occurred : a hunted Saxon hussar, of a regiment I know pretty well, crossed the Alsette, and his horse was shot dead under him on the wrong side of the frontier. With the exception of that case, I will defy any Luxemburger to prove a case of violation of frontier against the Germans. They were violating such neutrality continually, as I can prove.

PART II.

So ends our first visit to Malmaison. After this there came a long time and worry. Louis wanted to marry Marie, and the whole party of Courriers and Canzons, who seemed to get more innumerable as time went on, insisted most emphatically that they were both too young; and as the wild argument went on, it became evident, both to myself and my father, that Marie was getting very doubtful whether she cared to marry him at all. There were two parties among the Courriers and Canzons, by no means divided by name, only by sex. The women, to one woman or nearly so, said that she ought to marry him; and the men, to a man or nearly so, said that she ought to have time to think over the matter. As it was no possible business of my father's, he naturally took the most lively interest in it. He took the female side of the question, and worked at it to that extent that he got into trouble with his Bishop. My father knew one of the Courriers, a teacher of languages, who was an *émigré* of old times, and who lived at Chelsea and cultivated tulips and ranunculuses; my

father must needs go to him and talk over the matter. The end of the interview was so very stormy, that the old Frenchman told my father that he was to be found at Boulogne, or, if it pleased him, at Calais, any day which he chose to name. On discovering that my father was an ecclesiastic, he got still more infuriated, for he said my father, by his language, had violated the sanctity of his order. I do not believe that my father went farther than to tell the old man that he was not speaking the truth. My father was the most perfectly refined gentleman ; never rude, though he might be boisterous and contradictory at times. Anyhow, he wounded that Frenchman's feelings to that extent that he wrote to the Bishop ; and the Bishop wrote, in a rather peremptory manner, to my father. I will give the correspondence :

Enclosure No. 1. From the Bishop.


“REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I beg to call your attention to the enclosed copy of a communication which has been addressed to me by M. Ernest Courrier, and I beg to call your immediate attention to it.”

Enclosure No. 2. From M. E. Courrier to the Bishop.

“MONSEIGNEUR,—I beg emphatically to call your attention at once to the conduct of the Anglican parish priest of Holloway, who has, under protection of his sacred cloth, spoken injuries of me in my presence, not in any way to be tolerated by a man of honour. Had I been living in a civilised country, I, as a military man, though now retired, should not have dreamt of writing to any man's colonel about such an affair myself ; I should have taken the usual course with Mr. Thompson, and have fought him. But, Monseigneur my Lord Bishop, I have already done that, and he declines to meet me, on ecclesiastical grounds. My sword failing me, I am obliged to invoke the thunders of the Church, and request your excommunication. As a republican and communist myself, I do not think they will have the least effect, as I am bound to tell you ; but a Frenchman's honour is at stake.”

Enclosure No. 3. From the Bishop to M. Courrier.

“DEAR SIR,—*Voulez-vous préciser votre accusation ?* What has he said ? I know that he is often *empoité*, but he is certainly a gentleman ; pray answer at once, for I have a great respect for him.”



Enclosure No. 4. From M. Courier to the Bishop.

“MONSEIGNEUR,—I deeply regret the conclusion of your most courteous (though brief) letter. You say that you have great respect for Rector Thompson ; I, for my part, have none whatever, and so it gives me deep pain to disagree with so gifted a man as your lordship. The affair between myself and Rector Thompson eats itself, and I have been informed by a compatriot that the Rector Thompson has called me in public an old fool of a French-grammar teacher. I take no notice of this, because it only comes from second hand ; but as you ask me to precise my accusation, I will do so, and tell you what Rector Thompson said to my face. I will leave you, monseigneur, to decide whether or no he is fit to minister the offices of the religion in which you both believe, but in which I do not.

“A marriage is on the *tapis* between my cousin Louis and Marie Canzon. I, with the rest of my family, object to it. They are both too young to know their own minds. When I said this to Rector Thompson, who knows nothing about the matter, he said I was as one deprived of understanding ; and when I said that the girl did not want the man, he said that I was not

speaking the truth. I have thus, my dear Monseigneur, precised my accusation."

Enclosure No. 5. From the Bishop to my Father.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I have received a letter from M. Courier of Chelsea, in which he accuses you of calling him an old fool, and also accusing him of untruth. Is this so?"

Enclosure No. 6. From my Father to the Bishop.

"MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,—It is perfectly true that I called M. Courier an old fool (and if he is anything, he is that); it is equally true that I think him so; and if your lordship chooses to suspend me, I shall submit to your lordship's decision with the most perfect and entire obedience. I am here, my lord, to speak the truth, and I will speak it. The man *is* an old fool; I never saw a greater. With regard to my telling him that he was not speaking the truth, I acknowledge that also, and I will hold to my words. Any punishment from your lordship will be received with thankfulness and meekness; but I am resolute."

Enclosure No. 7. From the Bishop to my Father.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—There is something behind-hand which you have not told me. Please, like an old friend and fellow-collegian, tell me why you are so hot over this business. *Dear Sam, tell me the whole truth.* Never mind Bishop or Rector, but let me know all, as if we were in neighbouring beds, as at Eton thirty years ago. This Frenchman is very troublesome, and you know that you were a fighting boy in old times. Let me know all about it, old friend—dear friend for ever. You know my position; don't try me too hard."

Enclosure No. 8. From my Father to the Bishop.

"DEAR GEORGE,—You remember that pretty boy Shepherd of Lincoln? Well, he has done no good except marry a wife as pretty as himself, beget nine children, and then die of phthisis. He was my curate when he died; and I don't in the least degree see what Mrs. Shepherd is to do. Under-paid parsons should not marry;—but, at all events, send me something for her, and get some of your charitable women to do something to prevent her going entirely to the bad.

“There has been trouble between us for a post or two, my dear George, and I will tell you all about it. As in all great rows of this kind, there is something personal going. Marie Canzon is engaged to one of my former pupils, Louis Courier; but his brother Alphonse is as badly in love with her as Louis. Now this I could stand—I could see my way out of all that; but my own boy, the boy of my heart, who will take to nothing [this is your journalist] is as bad about her as any one. I want to see her married out of the way. She is a good girl, and has money; but I do not want my son to marry her. He is a capital fellow, but an utter fool. [I must pause to call your attention to the fact that my father is alluding to *me*. Nothing has happened since which makes me think my father wrong.] I don’t know what I can do with him, and I wish I may be hanged if he knows what he is going to do with himself. But he must not marry that girl. If she was poor, my dear Bishop, I would not care; for the boy has pluck and chivalry, and they would get on together; but the girl is rich, and my boy would never stand being kept by his wife. Old Courier is exasperated over the matter, and I have lost my temper with him. That is

all. Mind you, Bishop—or rather George—I am not sure whether she does not love Alphonse the best, when all is said and done ; but I will not have my son marry a rich woman, on whom he is dependent. A man had better hang himself than do that.”

Enclosure No. 9. From the Bishop to my Father.

“DEAR SAM,—I see you have not clearly explained the old Frenchman’s exasperation ; but I will do that for you. *Don’t let the girl marry your boy.* Any man who lives on his wife’s money becomes necessarily brutalised. The very savages don’t do it. I don’t want to make woman utterly dependent on man ; but, until these rascally laws against women are abolished, the old evil will go on. I know a very good fellow now, who through illness has been forced to cut into his wife’s property, and now wishes he was dead for doing so. Pray don’t let your son marry this rich Frenchwoman. A man had better marry a dairy-maid than marry a rich woman, more particularly of another nation, with all sorts of foreign influences around her, political and religious alike.”

Here closes this curious correspondence. Old M.

Courrier made friends with my father, through the Bishop's influence; and with regard to Marie, myself, Louis, and Alphonse, we never married at that time.

Pretty times came. I did little good at the university; but a man came to me and asked would I go for the *Daily Intelligence* to Balaclava. I would have gone on bread and water; and I went. The affair of Sebastopol must never be compared to the affair of Sedan. It must always be remembered that the affair of Sedan is the most terrible thing in history. In those very old days I was very young, and went away with the most enormous belief in the French army; and as a matter of fact I have never had to alter my opinion of it at all. I believe now, that if the best generals are appointed, and if the officers will get out of that absurd habit of sauntering into the first café the moment their men are dismissed, there will arise from the ashes of the present ruined army an army as fine as France ever saw. A French baron said to me the other day, just after Forbach, "Nos officiers sont toujours en café." It is terribly true about French officers; let English officers take care that it is not said about them. In the Crimea there were no temptations of that kind, and

look how well both English and French did ! No three armies ever behaved more nobly in the field than the British, the French, and the Russian. For me, after Inkerman, I would back the Russians against the Germans ; but then I should require one German to three Russians, which is very long odds. I am of opinion, that, of all the troops in the world, the Germans are the best, and the Bavarians the best of the Germans. (An exasperating friend of mine says that the Affghans, give them equal arms, are the best of all ; but he is a lunatic at large.) It is most perfectly certain that Saxony, Bavaria, and Baden have developed powers of swift marching, and *elan* in attack, to which no other nation can compare. I am speaking simple truth when I tell this story. I interchanged bows with General Alvensleben in Lorraine, and in five days he had taken up his command before Paris. In old times the French used to say of other armies, " Ils marchent, nous courons." The reverse is the truth now. The French march slowly and fight badly. Why ? Because in the flashy Italian war the Emperor Napoleon III. won his battles by destroying his best troops. That is the little reason why.

As to the Crimea, Louis was in that fight on the telegraph-hill at the Alma, which Kinglake denies altogether. He was, however, wounded and decorated, and seemed to like it. After this he went to New Caledonia, where he did not get decorated; and then he went to Mexico, where he did. He was out of the Italian business altogether, and was always going to marry Marie when he came home. He seemed in no great hurry; and indeed Marie waited with wonderful patience. She, during the Mexican business, went into retreat, taking vows for four months with the *Sœurs des Sept Douleurs*, in a dirty, silly, insignificant place called Sedan. (The place is on the Meuse, and has pleasant groves on the glacis.) Louis was very angry at her doing this; and when Bazaine sent him home with despatches, he went straight to Sedan, after depositing his despatches at Paris, for the purpose of seeing Marie. Marie, being *en retraite*, was not allowed to see him, which gave rise to the following correspondence:—

*The Lady Superior of Notre Dame des Sept Douleurs,
Sedan, to M. Louis Courier.*

“MONSIEUR,—I have the honour to inform you, that
Mademoiselle Canzon is *en retraite*.

“AGATHA.”

M. Louis Courier to the Lady Superior.

“VENERABLE MOTHER,—Mademoiselle Marie Canzon
is *fiancée* to me, and if I do not see her I will beat your
doors down. We have done by no means well in
Mexico, and are a little out of temper. If you refuse
me a sight of Marie, I will have the garrison of Sedan
at your gate.”

*The Lady Superior of the Sept Douleurs to the Captain
Louis Courier.*

“DEAR SIR,—I received your communication duly.
I have only to say that we will die praying. You have
our entire forgiveness. When we meet in another and
a better world, which seems hardly probable, you will
regret this.”

Louis Courier to the Lady Superior.

"MADAME OR MOST HOLY MOTHER,—I should be very much obliged if you would explain yourself. Neither I nor any of the garrison have the slightest intention of cutting your throat or injuring you in any way. I have come from Mexico, and I want to see my *fiancée*. Why can I not see her ?

"LOUIS COURRIER."

Lady Superior to Louis.

"SIR,—I am not aware that you wished to cut my throat ; but Mademoiselle Canzon is in retreat, and cannot be seen at present."

Bishop of L—— to Louis Courier.

"DEAR CAPTAIN,—I am very sorry for you, but what *can* I do ? Your lady-love is in retreat, and, as far as I see, must stay there for another month. Let her remain ; let her be. Are you sure of her ? In my opinion you have rivals. I know who those rivals are, but I do not choose to tell. Don't plague the girl with your addresses. I assure you that I want to see the girl

as well married as if I was her father. I would not object to her marrying a Protestant Englishman or an utter atheist like yourself. Leave the girl alone, and she will come to you. She does not know her own mind yet. Let her alone, and you may get her yet. I could tell you more, but I dare not. Be kind to her, lad, and she will be kind to you through everything."

Louis to the Bishop.

"MONSEIGNEUR,—I do not understand your letter entirely. Marie was *fiancée* to me, and, in the name of all furies, I will have the contract carried out."

The Bishop to Louis.

"MY DEAR BOY,—No one ever dreamt that you *would* understand my letter. I only say this to you—don't marry that woman until you have thoroughly won her heart. Come, captain, let us have it out between us. What have you done to deserve her? I have got you there. She is infinitely your superior. You are a mere machine. She has genius; you have none. You are a sharp fellow; she is no fool. She may marry you if you behave yourself. If she marries

you, it will be the first piece of folly she has ever committed. In the mean time, I ask you to leave the Lady Superior of the Sept Douleurs alone."

Louis to the Bishop of L——.

"MONSEIGNEUR,—I thank you for your allusions to my Voltairism; but I deeply regret that I cannot take your advice, excellent as it was. My sweetheart is mewed up by the Lady Superior of Notre Dame des Sept Douleurs, and I cannot in any way get at her. I am only a young Frenchman, and not a young Englishman; if I am not allowed to see my sweetheart, I will raise a dust about your head and that of the Lady Superior which will sweep you utterly away. Such an affair would not be tolerated for one instant in England or Prussia. I demand to see this girl, who is *fiancée* to me. I demand to know her mind about myself."

The Bishop to Louis.

"DEAR SIR,—I will take good care that you see the girl. Do not get *emporté*. I will meet you in Bazeilles to-morrow morning at ten, and I will bring the girl with me."

That is actually a fact. Louis, by some of those wonderful arrangements of the French army, found it possible to be at Sedan, because Marie Canzon was staying with her aunt. The Bishop, for reasons only known to himself and probably the Pope, was there also; and Sedan being a most disagreeable place, you naturally strolled out to Bazeilles. So the Bishop, Louis, and Marie were all together in the street of Bazeilles

Bazeilles was a little suburb of Sedan, with a very pretty street. There were trees there, and the work-people from the manufactories made it like a Clamart or a Meudon, and used to go out to it and amuse themselves in front of the cafés. They used to bathe in the Meuse also, but no one bathes now lest he should swim against a corpse. I asked, the other day, at Namur in Belgium, "Had any corpses come down?" and the singularly practical answer was, "Not yet; we shall have no bodies down until the winter flood." It was at Bazeilles that Marie and Louis met at this time.

He saw her at the street's end; and when the Bishop had descried him, he went into the church and assisted

the curé, leaving her to tell the whole story by herself. I think he was wise.

Louis came clanking on towards her, in his blue tunic and scarlet trousers, looking like a king of men. She was dressed in quiet grey, but looking as lovely as Frenchwomen always do. She ran up to him, and took his hands in hers.

"There is difficulty in seeing you," he said.

"Will you kiss me, Louis?"

"Do you care for me, Marie?"

"I think I care for you more than any man on the face of the earth. There are two others, Louis—there are two others whom I love."

"There may be half a hundred, for all I know. All I want to know is, whether you love me above all men in the whole world?"

Marie said:

"I love you as well as any, but I love the Englishman and Alphonse as well as I do you. Dearest well-loved, do not let us marry; it would be a *bêtise*."

"I will murder Alphonse and the Englishman!" said Louis.

"Dearest, why?" she answered. "They have done no harm."

"They have done harm to me, curse them! I wanted you, and you will not come to me."

"Think of your own folly, my Louis. You would never be contented with one-third of a heart. Pray think one instant. I love you, but I love others as well. What would you have? I know that you do not want my money; if you care for it, I will give it you at once. You have only to say one solitary word, and all the money which I have is yours for ever. Leave me poor, for your own dear sake; but understand once for all, that at present I cannot be the wife of you or any other man. Will you take my money, and let me go free?"

Louis could not do that. I think that at the bottom he was a snob, but at all events he was not snob enough for that. He said—

"Am I such a hound that you cannot take me?"

"Dear Louis, you are the best of men, I am sure, the very best of men; but, dear, dear Louis, I am afraid I cannot marry you."

Louis urged his case.

"Am I ill-looking?"

"She answered by saying, "Give me a kiss."

And he bent his handsome head down, and gave her one.

"You are the handsomest man in France," she said.

And he did not disagree with her.

"Am I cruel?" he said.

"I never knew you so," she answered; "you have always been kind."

"Have I worried you with my attentions?"

"Never, dearest Louis, for an instant."

"Then why cannot it be?"

"Because it cannot, Louis; it can never be in all time. I cannot, cannot do it."

"Are you going to marry the Englishman?"

"Now, Louis," she said, "we are coming to terms. I swear to you, in this street of Bazeilles, that if I ever marry any one, it shall be you. Will that content you?"

Louis said, "That ought to content any man;" for Louis, though a prig, was a gentleman.

"I love Alphonse, I love the Englishman, and I love you far more dearly than you think; but why cannot I

love you without marrying you ? I have three friends now ; why should I make two out of the three enemies ? Do you see ?”

Louis never could be brought to see it. Alphonse and your humble servant accepted their fate. Marie did not want to marry—an old fool at our club said that she would have been a great fool if she had ; but he was only an old fool, such as one meets.

At this period of the conversation the Bishop, having finished service, deployed out of the church, and came upon Louis and Marie.

“ I know,” he began, “ all that you have been saying. Has she told you that she has taken vows for one year ?”

Louis stood aghast. His hopes were over.

“ Ah, but she has, though,” said the Bishop ; “ and I think that she is perfectly right, if it is only on the ground of defending her property. Like a true woman, she has concealed the whole truth ; but she has done it. She did not tell you ?”

“ No, Monseigneur,” said Louis,

“ You must have penance for that, my lady,” said the Bishop. “ But you see your fate, M. Louis Courier.

For me, I would sooner have had her marry the Protestant Englishman; for the English have a notion of Christianity, though their sacraments are of no avail to salvation. It is all over; she has taken vows for one year."

The dark, horrible cloud came down. In an evil hour France marched on Germany, and the Teutonic wave rose like a sea. Every one who knew anything about affairs knew that it was a horrible and ghastly affair; but our daily press insisted on fiddling while Rome was burning. I was among the French *émigrés* at Mondorf, and was talking to them about the state of affairs. It was most obvious that I could not get into Metz (the last man who ever left Metz was the correspondent of the *Scotsman*). It was obvious on the 10th of August that I could not get into Metz, and so I determined to get into Thionville. With this idea, I stayed a little time at Mondorf, making expeditions across the frontier.

I came, hurried with dust and heat, back to Mondorf. The first thing I asked for was my own paper, which was handed to me. I was very late for the

dinner, but I asked for soup, and ate it. Then I looked up for the French Baron, an *émigré* from Metz, a man whom I had met often before. I bowed to him, his wife, and his two beautiful young daughters, and they returned my bows.

"What news, M. le Rédacteur?" he said.

I said in reply, "M. le Baron, the worst of news. I cannot conceal the truth from you. The French are beaten back on all quarters. M. le Baron, the French are not fighting."

A Frenchman said the 32nd Chasseurs had been cut to pieces; a lady in the room rose and left the table. She went down through every kind of danger to Metz. The 32nd Chasseurs was her own son's regiment; at Metz she heard that the regiment had never been engaged, but was at Strasburg.

But to resume: When I told the Baron of the results of Forbach and Spiecheren he sat silent, and his beautiful daughters began to cry. And looking past them I saw a woman I never thought to see again; it was Marie Canzon, dressed all in grey.

I said to her at once, "Come here;" and she came. I said, "Where are you going?"

She said, "Into Metz."

I replied, "I am a hired man, and cannot go. Hired men can do nothing. Hired men have no souls. When once a man is hired and paid, he is dead for most good things: a man had better be dead and trusting to God's mercy than be hired to lie."

"You need not lie," she said. "You never did lie in old times."

"I never lie now," I answered; "but I am irritated, dearest Marie, by my proprietors writing and asking me to put a gloss on to matters which are perfectly obvious, to suit their politics."

She laughed so pleasantly. "I can give you a piece of good advice," she said.

"And what is that?"

"Do nothing of the kind, but speak the plain truth. You are poor and must live; but you are not poorer than I am."

"You are so rich."

"I am vowed to poverty; my money goes to the poor. Now we must have a most important talk together; you must get me into Metz."

"Marie, it is utterly impossible. — has come

out, the last man left ; — has been too late ; — dare not try it for his life. I cannot do it ; it is utterly impossible.”

“ I know that it is utterly impossible,” she said ; “ but it must be done, and you must do it.”

“ But my duty to my proprietors ?” I said.

“ I am not talking about your proprietors ; I am talking of mine.”

“ Who are they, Marie ?”

“ The Jesuits. I am ordered into Metz, and I must go. Am I to go alone, or will you help me ? If you can get me to St. Privat and Malmaison, I am safe. You must do it, you know, dear. We have got word that Sister Agatha is dead, and I am to take her place. I do not know the route from here to Malmaison ; but I *must* go as far as that, and then I will trouble you no farther.”

A dog would have done it for her, though how it was to be done required the sharpest of brains, and a considerable knowledge of localities, already got by scouting ; and I may say that I have a considerable amount of that courage which Aristotle calls *ἐμπειρία* ; besides, an old Oxford captain or Cambridge captain is

not easily beaten : I took it into my head that I would do this thing, and I did it. I went a rather remarkable way to work about it, however. I told her to stay where she was for two hours, and not go to bed until I came home; I then lighted my cigar, and sauntered down the street to the Café de l'Union to look at the telegrams, with my hands in my breeches-pockets.

I knew that I should meet the staff of the Luxemburg army there—but I commit no one in any way whatever, the Luxemburg people *are* terribly French. But I was not very long at that café ; I was very soon down in the lower town (the only thing worth seeing at Mondorf, if it mattered), and went into the Cabaret Moses, which was kept by an aged Jew ; and if there was a Christian in the place except myself, I am none. I wish that I had had a Jew with me, but I had not, and being extremely unlike a Jew myself, I had to brazen it out as an English commercial traveller. I seemed to play the *rôle* pretty well, for the Jews took me entirely at my own valuation. I spoke neither French nor German, but simple plain English. I knew that by that means I should catch a Jew who could speak English, and I caught three in no time. The

English are by no means the stupidest of nations. I had not been speaking ten minutes when a young Jew came rushing into the room eager to see the English commercial traveller, and eager for trade. I at once saw that he was the man I wanted, because he was obviously the poorest of the Jews, but I did not tell him so. I saw that he was poor, and a tanner by trade from the colour of his fingers ; he was my man.

I say that my course of action was most distinctly immoral, but I thought that it was for the best. She was very dear to me even then, and I would have died to serve her.

To this young Jew I pointed out that it was notorious that they were certain to have their horses die in Metz, and that it would be (God forgive me ; I cannot forgive myself) a most excellent thing to have an agent in Metz to buy up the dead horses—at that time I did not know that they would have to eat them. I will tell the truth, and the truth is that I lied for Marie's sake, though she never knew it. I told this young Jew tanner that I was a commercial traveller, and that if he could get my wife underground into Metz I would pay him, and, if it suited us both, do business with

him as regarded the horses' skins. I expect that one of the heaviest outcomes of this war, as of all others, will be a habit of hard lying not known in times of peace.

The young Jew believed me, for which I was extremely sorry; he winked his eye and went away. I sat there smoking and thinking for above an hour, and the results of my thoughts were, that I was a great rascal, and that the cigars were extremely bad; but my Jew came to me at last with a man whom I had seen before. I dare not give his name, or the place of his abode. I was most utterly astounded.

"M., you know what I want."

"Tout est possible, monsieur."

"Mais, mon cher, c'est si dangereux."

"Le danger est pour vous, mon ami."

I never was more astonished in all my life. He was perfectly ready to help us in any way, and if the *revanche* came, it must ultimately fall on him. It is no use blinding our eyes to the fact that the Luxemburg people love the French in the deepest manner. They may be foolish or they may not, but we consider the definition of a fool is "a man who won't face facts." I

wish that Ireland loved us as well as Luxemburg loves France. Ireland seems not to love us at any time, but the love of Luxemburg for France is a matter which I have by no means made out.

My grey-haired acquaintance said that matters would be extremely difficult, but that he would do everything he could.

I asked what could he do ?

He answered, "Rien du tout," and went away.

And as I was asking the Jew if he could do anything, he suddenly flew into a most violent temper, and said that all we Christians were congenital fools. I let his temper go by (and a Jew, though violent, is not ill-tempered for a long time), and then I asked him, "was there a chance ?"

"A chance with a Jew in it !" he said ; "you have only got to hold your tongue."

"At what time shall I have to come to you ?" I asked.

The Jew said, "About eleven."

I went to Marie, and told her to hold herself in readiness about twelve ; then I ordered the horses, stipulating that they were not to go farther than Bettemburg,

and then I sent off my despatch. My despatch was all lamentation and mourning and woe ; for our paper went a little on the French side at that time. But a journalist must live—everyone must live ; and it seems to me that this war has plagued the journalists worse than any others. For me, I am a sad fellow, I doubt, for I should have minded my own business before getting Marie into Metz.

Some things a journalist remembers for ever. I remember the getting of Marie into Metz. When I remember that great journey, I am a little proud of my own courage, but I am still prouder of hers. When I came to her at twelve, everyone had gone to bed except one sleepy waiter. I was attended by the Jew whom I had deceived, and the tall grey-headed Luxemburg gentleman, also a Jew. Marie was nearly asleep ; but I roused her, and I told her that it was time to go. She had everything ready, and between sleeping and waking asked which route we were to take.

“What matters it, Marie ?” I said. “We have consulted, M. L. has consulted, and M. Solomans has consulted. We are in the hands of M. Solomans. Come, therefore, away.”

"Go, dear lady," said M. L.

"But what route?" she still urged.

"Esch, Audun la Tige, and Briey," I answered; "it is the only chance. We must get on through Ste. Marie aux Chênes and St. Privat."

"God's will be done," she said; and we went away together.

I don't know what women are made of, myself; I only know that, as we were rattling over the great Luxemburg bridges, Marie kissed my hand, and said, "Are we going to see Malmaison?" And I don't know what men are made of; for I did not kiss her hand in return, and made the perfectly idiotic remark that we should find out some day. As that remark meant nothing, it can have done no harm.

How strange it seemed, rattling all alone with her over the great bridges which span the magnificent glen of the Alsette in the moonlight! Our carriage was a small open one, a very pleasant little carriage indeed. M. L. and the Jew were on the box beside the driver, arguing as Jews will, and I found that they were driving to the railway station which is outside the glacis. I stood up, and whispered to M. L.,—

"That is no use, the line was cut to-day."

M. L. said, "*Taisez-vous, mon cher, taisez-vous.*"

We were at the railway station in a minute, and at a beck from M. L. I jumped out. The Luxemburg line was in French hands, as the Luxemburgers know to their cost; and I was hurried into a room between the two Jews, and found myself face to face with a small Parisian, who happened to be a friend of mine. The matter was put before him, and he was at once a conspirator.

"*Mademoiselle* is a Sister of Charity," he said, "and she will get into Metz. Our line was cut below Bettemburg to-day, but where we do not know; and then he pegged away at his telegraph, and began eating chocolate.

He took things remarkably cool, and said that the French were getting badly beaten, while we waited. Before there was time for much discussion, the wire began clicking again; and in ten minutes from our entering the office, he had got his answer, and said,—

"I have asked if there are carriages at Bettemburg, and if there are carriages at Esch. The answer is yes. We are sending down two engines to Bettemburg at

once to examine the line towards Thionville, but an engine will also start to Esch immediately after, and time is short. Will Mademoiselle—I should say la sœur—dare to go on it? It will save much time.”

I ran out to ask her, and she consented at once. There was no trouble with the railway people; we merely paid first-class fare, and I hoisted her up among the coke on the engine, and took my place beside her. A great man saw us, and came up and spoke to me, asking my intentions. I pointed to her sitting on the coke, and told him quietly what we were trying to do—that we were trying to get into Metz. He said not one word; but he went to the buffet (then shut), kicked at the door till it was opened by a sleepy young man (also of my acquaintance), and returned with a basket containing a fowl, some bread, and a bottle of wine for the refreshment of Mademoiselle.

“You,” he said to me, “will be shot for a spy, but stay by her as long as you can;” and so he jumped off the engine just as my young friend the Jew tanner jumped on.

“I have made it right,” he said, in English. “I have telegraphed to all our people. I have to pay alto-

gether sixty-six francs ; but you will pay me in return when the business between us is settled. The gallantry of your wife is so great, that I would do ten times that for you."


I was so taken aback, that I felt like a dog. At the risk of ruining everything I told him the whole truth, standing on the step of the engine ; she was not my wife, and I had deceived him.

"I wish you had trusted me before," said this good young man. "I thought it was odd that your wife should have taken vows ; but I never know what you Christians will do next. At all events, it is not too late ; I and M. L. and the rest of our people will see you through, depend on that."

"Let me pay you for the telegrams," I cried.

"Not one stiver," he cried. "The God of Moses bless you both !"

And that was the end of my singularly sharp bargain with the Jew tanner. I felt fearfully degraded, and I told Marie so ; in fact, I told her the whole truth ; and I rather fancy that that Jew tanner in Mondorf will find himself in possession of more capital for his business than he anticipated.



The drivers were French, one a native of Dol in Brittany, and the other from Dieppe in Normandy. Until we were fairly under way they never noticed either Marie or myself, and I thought they were going to be uncivil. But it was merely diplomacy; the instant we were off they were "down on us" by turns. The stoker was the first, and he instructed me how to take my own greatcoat, lay Marie on it, and cover her with my railway rug; "for," he said, "those who go to God's good works must be cared for by all who love God."

I thought that this benighted stupid Breton papist was not very far from the kingdom of God—in fact, I thought that he was very near it indeed.

Marie lay on the coke, quite quiet, without asking one question. She said once,—

"I am not in the least afraid with you; but it is so very strange."

I said, "It is as strange as a nightmare."

Then the Normandy driver came up and said, "She should cover her face over, for I must open the furnace. We are in danger, Monsieur, for those two locked engines are close before us; but we are safe, for she is

going to God's work. I hear that our people are beaten everywhere?"

"I fear so."

"A very good thing for them. But we must be very careful. These Prussians care neither for dog nor devil, and they may have cut the line on neutral territory. Have you seen these Prussians, M. the Englishman?"

"I have lived among them."

"What do you think of them?"

"That they are the best and kindest people alive," I said.

"That is very possible," he said. "The only one I ever knew worked with me at Mulhouse, and all the difference I could see between him and myself was, that he knew ten times more on general matters than I did myself. Monsieur, as a neutral, do you think these wars right?"

I said, "I think them of the devil. The English are never at peace, and so an Englishman may at least speak."

"How beautiful she looks!" he said, turning round from his crank and his fire, and declining further argu-

ment. "Attend to me, Monsieur. She wants to get into Metz. Well, then, they say that the line is cut somewhere between Bettemburg and Thionville. If you choose, I will follow the two engines before us, and try to get her to Thionville."

"My lad," I said, "I would go to the mischief after you, but we want to get in by the line of Esch ; follow your orders, and shunt at Bettemburg."

"She should try Thionville," he said.


"Ah, but she'd fail," I said. "She has courage enough, but she does not know everything."

So when we came to Bettemburg we were properly shunted on the line to Esch, at which place I took leave of my two friends of the locomotive, as far as I can see, for ever.

I got Marie a bed in Esch, to my immense surprise, and I also slept myself with the landlord's son over the henroost. That young man had a dexterity in catching fleas which I never saw exhibited before, though I have had some experiences in Germany. It is my opinion that that young man never sleeps at all, which seems on the face of it an impossibility. I can only say,

that the night I was there he spent in cracking fleas. I allowed myself to be "grazed on," and slept until the cock woke, which seemed to me to be about five minutes after I had got to sleep. I dressed myself in a *négligé* manner, and tried to get hold of that cock and pay for him after ; but I could get neither the front door nor the back door open. In the mean time the landlord, who had been dining with some friends, and who likewise had bought a revolver, raised a cry of "*Voleurs !*" on me, and my life was saved by the nimbleness and dexterity of a little Jew ; and I was allowed to go to bed again, wondering why all the Jews in Jewry should turn up just when they were wanted.

When I came down to breakfast next morning, I was received with remarkable *empressement* by every one. Every one seemed to know our business, and every one seemed most frantically fond of me. When Marie came down, the whole of the little company rose like one man. There was a place left next me for her—next to the landlord ; but I noticed that the little Jew stuck to his place on my left. I soon knew why.



"Monsieur," he said, "it is all equal. I know all about you. You are not of the Red Cross of Geneva?"

I said frankly,—

"How could I be? I am a journalist."

"But you want to get through with the good Sister?"

"I must."

"I know. I know all. My uncle has telegraphed to me. Will you please take my directions? The Red Cross with — and — are going to and fro, but you cannot."

"Why?"

"Because you have Bernstorff's pass on you at this moment to the Brandenburgers, and you would be torn to pieces if your papers were examined."

"How the devil did you know that?" I asked, furiously.

"Jews know many things," said the boy. "Now I want you to listen to me. There has been a row this morning at Audun la Tige, and six Germans have been killed. Archduke Charles has ordered the place to be burnt; but you must get through it. You

must *walk*, and you will find your carriage on the hill beyond the town."

"But our luggage?"

"Your luggage has gone on. I was with Mademoiselle Marie before you were, and she packed her bag and sent it on. That is what made her so late for breakfast. Do you know that my brother has been up and packed your things for you, and that they are over the frontier now?"

"Now I am ruined," I said; "this has ruined everything. My private papers—good heavens!"

"What, you mean your locked writing-case?" and the young rascal produced it from under the table.

I did not know whether to kick him or kiss him. I said,—

"You are pretty free and easy, my lad."

"Jews are," he said. "Now look here," he went on; "you look out for our people, and don't quarrel with the Jesuits. We rule the roast; you others are nothing."

I was so utterly astounded at the boy that I said,—

"What do you think of the Red Republicans?"

The scorn of that boy's face is not to be described by powers so poor as mine.

I said, "They'll win."

And the Jew boy said, "Win!" and sniffed.

However, this is only the opinion of a Jew boy on the confines of Luxemburg. In what follows, the author is most extremely careful to keep perfectly close to the truth in details, and so he will omit Marie altogether, and, merely saying "we" instead of "I," will just simply tell the plain truth, without one single exaggeration.

We walked very fast to the frontier on the little Alsette, and there saw our first dead horse—a disagreeable experience, for he had bled so terribly on the grass of the pretty meadow. And there was other blood than that of horses, and one of us got a little frightened. Not I. I said, "You will have to go through worse than this;" and the other person said, "I do not doubt it." But as we were in the midst of one of the most famous flights, *at that time*, known in history, we said no more.

The French peasantry had taken Archduke Charles at his word, and were flying into Luxemburg. I saw it

with my own eyes, and so I can describe it ; or if you bind me down, I *cannot* describe it. It was all so utterly new, and to me so extremely painful. I will not say that it was horrible, even at the worst moment. It was immeasurably *sad*.

We found ourselves pressing on amidst a sea of blue-clothed peasants, talking loudly, and carrying burdens, walking as swiftly as they could, the men carrying the bundles and the women carrying the children and leading the cows. I said to Marie, "If this goes on, I shall put my head in a corner and make a fool of myself."

My companion expressed exactly the same sentiment, though in more refined language. The flight from Audun la Tige is a thing which no man born of a true woman will ever forget to the day of his death. We adhere strictly to facts, and adhere so strictly, that some of our facts about Audun la Tige may have been read before.

In the crowd and confusion of the fugitives one thing struck me most strongly : a woman—and a beautiful woman too—was standing before a little *auberge*, and saying continually, "*Dix-huit ans, dix-huit ans !*" I

do not know in the least what she meant ; but she had a baby in her arms, and the baby was dead.

We went on walking swiftly, until there were very few fugitives. The last we met were three young men running, and after them a young man who was very drunk. Then we entered the French village, which we believed to be doomed.*

It was a very pretty village, with sheets of rolling woodland all around it. A prosperous little village ; but the first thing we saw as noticeable was a white flag with a red cross on it, and a dark-blue figure in the centre of the street, who instantaneously seemed to aim at us with his musket. I at once threw myself between Marie and the Zündnadelgewehr, and running towards the German, asked what he meant by coming to the "present" before a lady. He was a fine lad, a finer I have never seen, and he laughed at me. "It was the new drill," he said. "Why, the very Belgians did the same." It was pretty true ; but I most cer-

* It is scarcely fair to write all this down in a little story which is professedly fictional, because it happens to be every word of it true. The flight of the French peasantry from Audun la Tige was in its way more remarkable than the slaughter at Sedan. At least so the writer thinks, who saw both things.

tainly wish, that in challenging entirely inoffensive persons like myself, foreign nations would not come to the "present." I blew this lad up about it, and he, like a sensible lad, agreed with me, and also asked me if I had the *Illustrated London News*. I happened to have that paper, and gave it to him.

"The staff-officer," he said, "is of the Brandenburg Hussars. He is at the upper end of the town. I know who you are. You are the Englishman who is pushing his wife into Metz; a Jew told me."

At the upper end of the town we met the Brandenburgers—the Brandenburg Hussars, the regiment of Ziethen. They had called back the carriage which had been sent on by the Jews, and they kept us there. The colonel came to me personally, and said that Madame must wait, for that he knew absolutely nothing. She must go into Metz, of course, if she chose; but he could say nothing at all.

A very old German Jew, a sutler, came out and took the commandant aside. If I were to die to-morrow, I could not tell you what that Jew said to him; but he came back to me and said,—

"Has the young lady courage?"

I said, "She has the courage of a Frenchwoman,"

"The business will be very difficult in crossing the lines. It would be much better for her to go in one of the Johanniter wagons, if she does not mind riding in the straw. The Jew says that it would be much better."

I thanked him heartily, and put the question to Marie; and she said she would like it better; and so I dismissed the carriage, and hoisted her into the tail of the Johanniter wagon, and we began our quaint journey into Lorraine.

We soon left the trail of Brandenburg and Saxony who had, you will understand, kept very closely to the Luxemburg frontier in their eagerness to dash at the French left; for in real truth they troubled Vinoy but little, and fought against M'Mahon. We were, by advice of the Jew, on a Johanniter wagon; but the English Society under Furley was in the same train, and so Marie and I in the straw went travelling up the hills, on one of the strangest journeys ever known.


So very strange it was to be sitting beside her in that straw, and talking over old friends and playmates, and passing through quiet empty villages, in which

every house was shut up. There was above Audun la Tige a solitary old woman in a field with a cow. She had a rope round the cow's neck, and was arguing with it; but the cow disagreed with her, and she banged that cow on the neck, and made it come the way she wanted. I remember that that was one event. After the desolate old woman and her solitary cow, we mounted to the plateau of Lorraine, and began to get to the German outposts, toiling along very slowly.

A German general came pricking up with gold spectacles, and I jumped down and arrested him. I told him that I was helping a young French lady to get into Metz, and he at once rode up to the tail of our wagon, and getting off his horse, spoke to her bareheaded.

"You will find it both difficult and dangerous, Madame," he said; "but if anything can do it, this will. I will write you a paper, which will do you all the good I can. I understand, of course, from looking at your face, that you will not read this paper, but will merely present it to Dr. F. I also understand that you will give no military information."

"Sir," she said, "I am utterly incapable of such a thing. I am as incapable of it as I am of neglecting to



thank you for your wonderful kindness. Do not destroy our country utterly, sir."

"Madame, that must depend on your rulers. Mein Herr" (to me), "stop your wagon, for I must write."

I shall never forget his sweet, calm face as he stood and wrote a note in a book which he took from his pocket, standing at the tail of our wagon. It was very quickly written, and I never saw it; he folded it, and handed it to Marie. It was hurriedly directed in pencil to Dr. Fuchs, the hero of the hospitals, the man whose name should live for all time.

When the wagon-wheels had ceased rattling, I became aware of a sound in the air other than thunder. I took the liberty of asking the general if there was any heavy bombardment going on. He said, "Our people are saluting Thionville; nothing more than that." And so we toiled on again; and after a few miles, now in the rear of the other wagons, we were out of the German band, and into the French band, which extended there from Audun la Romain to Briey. The last we saw of the Germans was this: Our friend the general was feeling the French with the extreme left of the Brandenburgers as far as he dare go. He rode very slowly,

and hung about our wagon with one of his staff-officers. On a sudden, close to Audun la Romain, three flying horsemen, accompanied by a prisoner, came round on the tail of our wagon, one of whom made reports to him, and one of whom was sitting on his horse, deadly pale, and spirting blood over his blonde mustache. These were his Uhlans, sent to "feel" the enemy, and one of whom had felt a chassepot through his chest. The young man with the blood running over his mustache had his hand clutched tight on the bridle of a young French officer, and that young French officer was Louis, though Marie did not see it !

That was all that we saw of him for the present, for dealing a blow to the wounded German, he got his bridle loose, and sped away across the fields. The German general cried out to the Uhlans, who were away after him, and they came back. The wounded Uhlan looked round sleepily, kicked his feet out of his stirrups, and fell heavily over on the ground, with that ugly noise which nothing but a falling man can make.

"He is in your line, I think," said the general. "Will you take him ?"

I had got him into the wagon already, but I heard the general say to the other Uhlans :

“ If Bazaine is out again, we shall have a battle to-morrow. Von Hezzerstein, Alvensleben is at Amandvilliers ; get to him across country, and see for the orders.”

By this time I had got my wounded Uhlan up into the straw. Von Hezzerstein, the Uhlan—a nobleman, if it mattered—jumped off his horse, and kissed him. They seem to have been fast friends, for he kissed him before he sped away, and our wagon went on.

I said to Marie, “ Now you have one of your enemies in your hands.”

And she said, “ Thank God.”

But we could do absolutely nothing. The German had been shot through the chest, and the wagon with the doctor was on before. We did not know what to do in any way. It became evident to us that he was dying in our arms, and Marie asked him of what religion he was. He said feebly that he was Catholic.

“ Then we are both puzzled,” said Marie. “ We can neither of us do anything for him.”

"Why can't you leave him to God?" I said a little angrily.

And indeed we did; and when morning broke over the beautiful Lorraine, and we got into Briey, the horrible thunder of the battle of the 16th was roaring in our ears, and the young German was dead between us in the straw. We had to take him out ourselves, with the help of the driver, who gave us very little assistance, for he was scared. The Johanniters buried him according to their vows.

Marie was bound by her vows, and I was determined to follow her as far as I could; so I went about at Briey, and asked everybody. Everybody said that getting into Metz was folly; but Marie was most resolute, and I determined to go with her as far as my duty to my proprietors would allow me. I was very late in making my inquiries, and Marie had gone to bed; so I told the immortal Mademoiselle Sophie that I must speak to Marie in her bed.

"Mais elle n'est pas madame."

"Diable!" (I am afraid I went so far as that,) "I want to get her into Metz, and must speak to her.

Come with me, and rouse her. If she is fool enough to mind you and me in her bedroom, she is not fit for the work which is before her."

Sophie nodded her head nearly off, and when it was nearly off her handsome shoulders said,—

"Mais vous avez raison."

Sophie went in, and turned her head over.

"C'est Monsieur le Rédacteur," she said.

And Marie turned her face on her pillow towards me, half-asleep and half-awake, and said,—

"What is it, my friend?"

Ah, heavens! if she could have said that a few years before! Not that I complain in any way; things would have been different, but they would not have been so well. I told my mother this story (as I tell her everything) when I came back from the war, and she said to me, "Sweetheart, would you have had it otherwise?" and I said, "Not for a million worlds."

I sat on a chair in the room, and I said,—

"Marie, there is but one chance for us. Can you walk to Metz? I have been in every direction asking, and that is our only chance."

"I can walk far and fast," she said.

"I have been collecting information," I said, "and I have found a Jew who can take you in. It is horribly dangerous, and let me persuade you not to go."

"I am bound to go," she said.

I said, "I cannot go farther than St. Privat or Amandvilliers."

"My dear friend," she said, laughing, "I would not be bothered with you farther. But we must pass Malmaison?"

"I fear so. Let me see the place before I die, and then let me die."

We left her to sleep. Mademoiselle Sophie came out of her room with me.

"Your Englishwomen are both resolute and *spirituelle*," she said; and I agreed with her.

Let me give a tribute to a very grand woman. Mademoiselle Sophie of Briey is not the sort of woman at present producible in England. She has worked like a galley-slave with her brother to make her house a good one, and the war has ruined her and her brother. They have actually nothing at all; but in her complaints about the German requisitions there was not one word of

anger. She was quite prepared to begin life over again. Lazy English ladies might take a lesson from Mademoiselle Sophie.

I can see her now coming into my bedroom at four o'clock in the morning with the *petites choses* for Mademoiselle Marie. When we started at half-past four, the awful horror of the day of the 17th had not begun. Sophie shrieked after us "*Bon voyage*," and we were away together down the steep street over the pretty bridge, and then up through Aboue, one of the sweetest places on the earth. I remember that we waited on the bridge to see a man throwing a casting-net, and while we were there we heard the cannon begin in the summer morning.

I asked her to turn even then, but she refused, and we went up aloft on to the plateau, where we two solitary poor fools saw the affair of the 17th, one of the most terrible battles of all. I was afraid of her a little at first, because she clutched my arm once when she saw Ste. Marie aux Chênes burn, but she only said,—

"The thing has to be done, and must be done. I must get into Metz this way."

The affair of St. Privat was singularly horrible among all the great battles. The Germans felt for Bazaine's left, and debouching from the woods, found him in force at Ste. Marie, at St. Privat, and at Amandvilliers. We believe that that is the real truth about the August battles. I see that Bazaine now says, that Amandvilliers was the central point of the great battle of Gravelotte. We shall never know.

Marie and I saw the battle of St. Privat very well from a distance. She stood the fire and smoke very well, and she sat most patiently with me under a tree. The French were not driven back fairly before three in the afternoon, and then I thought it safe to go on. There was not the least difficulty. There was not one who was not too tired to interfere with one; but just before we came to Ste. Marie aux Chênes, I saw, from the heaped scarlet and blue masses on the road, that we were coming among the dead, and I was anxious.

I said, "You know what those are, lying in the road and in the fields?"

She said, "I am not in the least afraid."

But, as in all cases, the first dead man upset her—a

very pretty lad, in scarlet trousers and a blue tunic, who lay across the road right in our path, with his face to the sky, one leg straight out and one bent up nearly double. She began to cry ; but when I bent down and searched the dead man for papers to send to his friends she was quite comfortable again. She never flinched during the whole of that horrible day after the first dead man, though I flinched more than once among the wounded.

As an illustration of her nerve, I can tell this : The Germans were hurrying away the wounded French to Ste. Marie, St. Privat, and the Château at Jerusalem. She left me to look at the piles of dead by herself, and after a little while came hurrying to me, saying, "Here is a man who is not dead ;" and I hurried away breathless. It was a chasseur, and I tore his tunic open, and put my hand on his heart. She was right. She had seen it from his face. I ran to the German officer, and we saved the man.

I was not in the least degree afraid of her now. I *could* not go with her myself ; I must leave. I got her safe through the dead to Malmaison, which is between St. Privat and Amandvilliers ; at that place I thought

her life had come to an end, for although the last ruin of the place was reserved for a time, yet it was as good as ruined now. Everything was so much destroyed by the troops, that the bombardment affected it very little. It was only made a heap of broken stone-work after every room in the house had been violated before.

From Malmaison I got her to the ridge above Metz, and there was an objurgation between a German officer, a Jew, and a Jesuit. But the Jew and the Jesuit had the best of it; for, after I had shown Dr. F. a pass, she was let to go on; and I saw her go down all alone along the road with the Jew beside her, while the German officer marched me in an entirely contrary direction. I took the liberty to remark that I was a British citizen; but it was no good. *That game is over for the present.* As far as my experience goes, you had better call yourself a Greek than an Englishman now-a-days. I, in my own person, have been taken to task by Luxemburgers. National humiliation can't go much further. However Marie was safe into Metz, and I had to go to work for my newspaper again.

I ran off as hard as I could go after the Branden-

burgers, and got in with them, whereby I got into trouble with my proprietors, because Von Heldensheim insisted that all my letters sent by the feld-post should be open; and I now discover that he has put lewd (in the good sense, *ludibricè*) remarks into them, and has done me no good, either with my employers or the general public. Von Heldensheim shall answer for this. He dared not have taken such a liberty with some others. It is altogether too bad of him. A Frenchman would never have made such a *mauvaise plaisanterie*. But I have my eye on Von Heldensheim; and when he least expects it, I will be down on him.

Then came the unutterable ruin of Sedan. But, as Thackeray did in *Pendennis*, I began my story at the latter end. Will you have the conclusion of it? I will give it you.

Marie was in Metz all through the siege. I have nearly told my story, and why should one continue a story when every educated person could end it for himself?

Marie had been a whole fortnight, or nearly so, in Metz, when my duties called me once more to Briey;

and I at once went to the inn kept by Mademoiselle Sophie, the niece of old Sophie, the nurse of the Courriers, who has been mentioned before.

She was very mysterious and cool ; and I asked her if I had given any offence, whereupon she kissed me, and began to cry. I could not exactly understand why at first, but it seemed that there was plenty to cry about. Louis was desperately wounded, and lying at Amandvilliers.

"So close to his old home," I said.

"There is no home now," she replied ; "Malmaison was burned down on the 18th."

"Anything further ?" I said.

"Yes," she said ; "he wants a letter got into Metz to Marie. Can you do it ?"

"I cannot undertake it," I said. "I got her in, but I cannot undertake to get a letter in now. Have you heard of Alphonse ?"

"Yes, he was here yesterday ; he has gone in person to the Archduke, to get his brother brought here. If you could go to St. Privat, I believe that you could get a letter taken. Louis will die if he does not see her—indeed I believe he will die anyhow."

"Has Alphonse gone to the Archduke?" I asked, amazed.

"Yes; I told him to go and speak for himself."

"Why? he might have written."

"He refused to write to the Archduke save as citizen," said Sophie. "Hark! O God, they have begun again!"

The windows began shaking and clattering, and the German garrison poured swiftly out from their billets, and formed up in the square. I left Sophie with the letter to Marie on me; and running into the stable saddled my horse, and rode southward at a hard gallop. When I was on the plateau above Aboue, I saw at once that Bazaine was out, and that one way or another it was all over. Men now call that horrible, hopeless confusion the battle of Gravelotte.

It only took seven hours; but I was twenty-six hours before I could get on to the ruins of Malmaison, and helped old Sophie to bury Alphonse. He had been on his way towards the Archduke, but had come to his old home, and had stood there a little too long. He could not have been very long there; but the business of Gravelotte was very sudden, and the French

raced up so quickly, that they were in the orchard before the Germans were ready ; and it is quite doubtful whether Alphonse was killed by French or German bullets. The rest you know. The letter from Louis got into Metz, *but no answer ever came out.*

The sortie of women had taken place, and the surrender was over, before I ever saw Louis. He was lying still at Amandvilliers, greatly better, but still weak. When I turned his head over, he asked me had Marie been heard of.

I said that I had been into Metz.

"Did you see Marie ?"

"No."

"Is she dead ?" he asked, sitting up in his bed.

I bowed my head.

"I wish I was," he said. "I wanted to begin all over again with her. I know I could have won her. I am so utterly changed, now that it is too late. I am so much better than I was. All my chauvinism is gone, and I am so very humble. It does seem very hard of God. How did she go to Him ?"

"She was killed in the streets by a shell, helping the wounded."

“Where is Alphonse?”

“With God. Killed in the orchard at Malmaison, trying to get at the Archduke.”

He lay down for a moment, and then turned his face to me and said,—

“There shall be vengeance for all this.”

God grant that his words may not come true!

END OF VOL. I.





